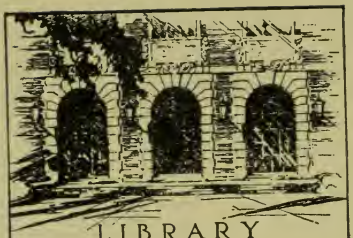

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# MIDDLEMARCH

A

## STUDY OF PROVINCIAL LIFE

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXXII

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# MIDDLEMARCH

## BOOK V.

## THE DEAD HAND

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# THE DEAD HAND.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

This figure hath high price: 'twas wrought with love
Ages ago in finest ivory;
Nought modish in it, pure and noble lines
Of generous womanhood that fits all time.
That too is costly ware; majolica
Of deft design, to please a lordly eye:
The smile, you see, is perfect—wonderful
As mere Faience! a table ornament
To suit the richest mounting.

DOROTHEA seldom left home without her husband, but she did occasionally drive into Middlemarch alone, on little errands of shopping or charity such as occur to every lady of any wealth when she lives within three miles of a town. Two days after that scene in the Yew-Tree Walk, she determined to use such an opportunity in order if possible to see Lydgate, and learn from him whether her husband had really felt any depressing change

of symptoms which he was concealing from her, and whether he had insisted on knowing the utmost about himself. She felt almost guilty in asking for knowledge about him from another, but the dread of being without it—the dread of that ignorance which would make her unjust or hard—overcame every scruple. That there had been some crisis in her husband's mind she was certain: he had the very next day begun a new method of arranging his notes, and had associated her quite newly in carrying out his plan. Poor Dorothea needed to lay up stores of patience.

It was about four o'clock when she drove to Lydgate's house in Lowick Gate, wishing, in her immediate doubt of finding him at home, that she had written beforehand. And he was not at home.

"Is Mrs Lydgate at home?" said Dorothea, who had never, that she knew of, seen Rosamond, but now remembered the fact of the marriage. Yes, Mrs Lydgate was at home.

"I will go in and speak to her, if she will allow me. Will you ask her if she can see me—see Mrs Casaubon, for a few minutes?"

When the servant had gone to deliver that message, Dorothea could hear sounds of music through

an open window—a few notes from a man's voice and then a piano bursting into roulades. But the roulades broke off suddenly, and then the servant came back saying that Mrs Lydgate would be happy to see Mrs Casaubon.

When the drawing-room door opened and Dorothea entered, there was a sort of contrast not infrequent in country life when the habits of the different ranks were less blent than now. Let those who know, tell us exactly what stuff it was that Dorothea wore in those days of mild autumn —that thin white woollen stuff soft to the touch and soft to the eye. It always seemed to have been lately washed, and to smell of the sweet hedges—was always in the shape of a pelisse with sleeves hanging all out of the fashion. Yet if she had entered before a still audience as Imogen or Cato's daughter, the dress might have seemed right enough: the grace and dignity were in her limbs and neck; and about her simply parted hair and candid eyes the large round poke which was then in the fate of women, seemed no more odd as a head-dress than the gold trencher we call a halo. By the present audience of two persons, no dramatic heroine could have been expected with more interest than Mrs Casaubon. To Rosamond she was one of those county

divinities not mixing with Middlemarch mortality, whose slightest marks of manner or appearance were worthy of her study; moreover, Rosamond was not without satisfaction that Mrs Casaubon should have an opportunity of studying *her*. What is the use of being exquisite if you are not seen by the best judges? and since Rosamond had received the highest compliments at Sir Godwin Lydgate's, she felt quite confident of the impression she must make on people of good birth. Dorothea put out her hand with her usual simple kindness, and looked admiringly at Lydgate's lovely bride—aware that there was a gentleman standing at a distance, but seeing him merely as a coated figure at a wide angle. The gentleman was too much occupied with the presence of the one woman to reflect on the contrast between the two — a contrast that would certainly have been striking to a calm observer. They were both tall, and their eyes were on a level; but imagine Rosamond's infantine blondness and wondrous crown of hair-plaits, with her pale-blue dress of a fit and fashion so perfect that no dressmaker could look at it without emotion, a large embroidered collar which it was to be hoped all beholders would know the price of, her small hands duly set off with rings, and that controlled

self-consciousness of manner which is the expensive substitute for simplicity.

"Thank you very much for allowing me to interrupt you," said Dorothea, immediately. "I am anxious to see Mr Lydgate, if possible, before I go home, and I hoped that you might possibly tell me where I could find him, or even allow me to wait for him, if you expect him soon."

"He is at the New Hospital," said Rosamond; "I am not sure how soon he will come home. But I can send for him."

"Will you let me go and fetch him?" said Will Ladislaw, coming forward. He had already taken up his hat before Dorothea entered. She coloured with surprise, but put out her hand with a smile of unmistakable pleasure, saying—

"I did not know it was you: I had no thought of seeing you here."

"May I go to the Hospital and tell Mr Lydgate that you wish to see him?" said Will.

"It would be quicker to send the carriage for him," said Dorothea, "if you will be kind enough to give the message to the coachman."

Will was moving to the door when Dorothea, whose mind had flashed in an instant over many connected memories, turned quickly and said, "I will go myself, thank you. I wish to lose no time

before getting home again. I will drive to the Hospital and see Mr Lydgate there. Pray excuse me, Mrs Lydgate. I am very much obliged to you."

Her mind was evidently arrested by some sudden thought, and she left the room hardly conscious of what was immediately around her—hardly conscious that Will opened the door for her and offered her his arm to lead her to the carriage. She took the arm but said nothing. Will was feeling rather vexed and miserable, and found nothing to say on his side. He handed her into the carriage in silence, they said good-bye, and Dorothea drove away.

In the five minutes' drive to the Hospital she had time for some reflections that were quite new to her. Her decision to go, and her preoccupation in leaving the room, had come from the sudden sense that there would be a sort of deception in her voluntarily allowing any further intercourse between herself and Will which she was unable to mention to her husband, and already her errand in seeking Lydgate was a matter of concealment. That was all that had been explicitly in her mind; but she had been urged also by a vague discomfort. Now that she was alone in her drive, she heard the notes of the man's

voice and the accompanying piano, which she had not noted much at the time, returning on her inward sense; and she found herself thinking with some wonder that Will Ladislaw was passing his time with Mrs Lydgate in her husband's absence. And then she could not help remembering that he had passed some time with her under like circumstances, so why should there be any unfitness in the fact? But Will was Mr Casaubon's relative, and one towards whom she was bound to show kindness. Still there had been signs which perhaps she ought to have understood as implying that Mr Casaubon did not like his cousin's visits during his own absence. "Perhaps I have been mistaken in many things," said poor Dorothea to herself, while the tears came rolling and she had to dry them quickly. She felt confusedly unhappy, and the image of Will which had been so clear to her before was mysteriously spoiled. But the carriage stopped at the gate of the Hospital. She was soon walking round the grass plots with Lydgate, and her feelings recovered the strong bent which had made her seek for this interview.

Will Ladislaw, meanwhile, was mortified, and knew the reason of it clearly enough. His chances of meeting Dorothea were rare; and here for the first time there had come a chance which had set

him at a disadvantage. It was not only, as it had been hitherto, that she was not supremely occupied with him, but that she had seen him under circumstances in which he might appear not to be supremely occupied with her. He felt thrust to a new distance from her, amongst the circles of Middlemarchers who made no part of her life. But that was not his fault: of course, since he had taken his lodgings in the town, he had been making as many acquaintances as he could, his position requiring that he should know everybody and everything. Lydgate was really better worth knowing than any one else in the neighbourhood, and he happened to have a wife who was musical and altogether worth calling upon. Here was the whole history of the situation in which Diana had descended too unexpectedly on her worshipper. It was mortifying. Will was conscious that he should not have been at Middlemarch but for Dorothea; and yet his position there was threatening to divide him from her with those barriers of habitual sentiment which are more fatal to the persistence of mutual interest than all the distance between Rome and Britain. Prejudices about rank and status were easy enough to defy in the form of a tyrannical letter from Mr Casaubon; but prejudices, like odorous bodies, have a double

existence both solid and subtle — solid as the pyramids, subtle as the twentieth echo of an echo, or as the memory of hyacinths which once scented the darkness. And Will was of a temperament to feel keenly the presence of subtleties: a man of clumsier perceptions would not have felt, as he did, that for the first time some sense of unfitness in perfect freedom with him had sprung up in Dorothea's mind, and that their silence, as he conducted her to the carriage, had had a chill in it. Perhaps Casaubon, in his hatred and jealousy, had been insisting to Dorothea that Will had slid below her socially. Confound Casaubon!

Will re-entered the drawing-room, took up his hat, and looking irritated as he advanced towards Mrs Lydgate, who had seated herself at her work-table, said—

"It is always fatal to have music or poetry interrupted. May I come another day and just finish about the rendering of 'Lungi dal caro bene'?"

"I shall be happy to be taught," said Rosamond. "But I am sure you admit that the interruption was a very beautiful one. I quite envy your acquaintance with Mrs Casaubon. Is she very clever? She looks as if she were."

"Really, I never thought about it," said Will, sulkily.

"That is just the answer Tertius gave me, when I first asked him if she were handsome. What is it that you gentlemen are thinking of when you are with Mrs Casaubon?"

"Herself," said Will, not indisposed to provoke the charming Mrs Lydgate. "When one sees a perfect woman, one never thinks of her attributes —one is conscious of her presence."

"I shall be jealous when Tertius goes to Lowick," said Rosamond, dimpling, and speaking with aëry lightness. "He will come back and think nothing of me."

"That does not seem to have been the effect on Lydgate hitherto. Mrs Casaubon is too unlike other women for them to be compared with her."

"You are a devout worshipper, I perceive. You often see her, I suppose."

"No," said Will, almost pettishly. "Worship is usually a matter of theory rather than of practice. But I am practising it to excess just at this moment—I must really tear myself away."

"Pray come again some evening: Mr Lydgate will like to hear the music, and I cannot enjoy it so well without him."

When her husband was at home again, Rosa-

mond said, standing in front of him and holding, his coat-collar with both her hands, "Mr Ladislaw was here singing with me when Mrs Casaubon came in. He seemed vexed. Do you think he disliked her seeing him at our house? Surely your position is more than equal to his—whatever may be his relation to the Casaubons."

"No, no; it must be something else if he were really vexed. Ladislaw is a sort of gypsy; he thinks nothing of leather and prunella."

"Music apart, he is not always very agreeable. Do you like him?"

"Yes: I think he is a good fellow: rather miscellaneous and *bric-à-brac*, but likable."

"Do you know, I think he adores Mrs Casaubon."

"Poor devil!" said Lydgate, smiling and pinching his wife's ears.

Rosamond felt herself beginning to know a great deal of the world, especially in discovering—what when she was in her unmarried girlhood had been inconceivable to her except as a dim tragedy in bygone costumes—that women, even after marriage, might make conquests and enslave men. At that time young ladies in the country, even when educated at Mrs Lemon's, read little French literature later than Racine, and public prints had

not cast their present magnificent illumination over the scandals of life. Still, vanity, with a woman's whole mind and day to work in, can construct abundantly on slight hints, especially on such a hint as the possibility of indefinite conquests. How delightful to make captives from the throne of marriage with a husband as crown-prince by your side—himself in fact a subject—while the captives look up for ever hopeless, losing their rest probably, and if their appetite too, so much the better! But Rosamond's romance turned at present chiefly on her crown-prince, and it was enough to enjoy his assured subjection. When he said, 'Poor devil!" she asked, with playful curiosity—

"Why so?"

"Why, what can a man do when he takes to adoring one of you mermaids? He only neglects his work and runs up bills."

"I am sure you do not neglect your work. You are always at the Hospital, or seeing poor patients, or thinking about some doctor's quarrel; and then at home you always want to pore over your microscope and phials. Confess you like those things better than me."

"Haven't you ambition to want your husband to be something better than a Middlemarch doc-

tor?" said Lydgate, letting his hands fall on to his wife's shoulders, and looking at her with affectionate gravity. "I shall make you learn my favourite bit from an old poet—

> 'Why should our pride make such a stir to be
> And be forgot? What good is like to this,
> To do worthy the writing, and to write
> Worthy the reading and the world's delight?'

What I want, Rosy, is to do worthy the writing,—and to write out myself what I have done. A man must work, to do that, my pet."

"Of course, I wish you to make discoveries: no one could more wish you to attain a high position in some better place than Middlemarch. You cannot say that I have ever tried to hinder you from working. But we cannot live like hermits. You are not discontented with me, Tertius?"

"No, dear, no. I am too entirely contented."

"But what did Mrs Casaubon want to say to you?"

"Merely to ask about her husband's health. But I think she is going to be splendid to our New Hospital: I think she will give us two hundred a-year."

# CHAPTER XLIV.

I would not creep along the coast, but steer
Out in mid-sea, by guidance of the stars.

When Dorothea, walking round the laurel-planted plots of the New Hospital with Lydgate, had learned from him that there were no signs of change in Mr Casaubon's bodily condition, beyond the mental sign of anxiety to know the truth about his illness, she was silent for a few moments, wondering whether she had said or done anything to rouse this new anxiety. Lydgate, not willing to let slip an opportunity of furthering a favourite purpose, ventured to say—

"I don't know whether your or Mr Casaubon's attention has been drawn to the needs of our New Hospital. Circumstances have made it seem rather egotistic in me to urge the subject; but that is not my fault: it is because there is a fight being made against it by the other medical men.

I think you are generally interested in such things, for I remember that when I first had the pleasure of seeing you at Tipton Grange before your marriage, you were asking me some questions about the way in which the health of the poor was affected by their miserable housing."

"Yes, indeed," said Dorothea, brightening. "I shall be quite grateful to you if you will tell me how I can help to make things a little better. Everything of that sort has slipped away from me since I have been married. I mean," she said, after a moment's hesitation, "that the people in our village are tolerably comfortable, and my mind has been too much taken up for me to inquire further. But here—in such a place as Middlemarch—there must be a great deal to be done."

"There is everything to be done," said Lydgate, with abrupt energy. "And this Hospital is a capital piece of work, due entirely to Mr Bulstrode's exertions, and in a great degree to his money. But one man can't do everything in a scheme of this sort. Of course he looked forward to help. And now there's a mean, petty feud set up against the thing in the town, by certain persons who want to make it a failure."

"What can be their reasons?" said Dorothea, with *naïve* surprise.

"Chiefly Mr Bulstrode's unpopularity, to begin with. Half the town would almost take trouble for the sake of thwarting him. In this stupid world most people never consider that a thing is good to be done unless it is done by their own set. I had no connection with Bulstrode before I came here. I look at him quite impartially, and I see that he has some notions—that he has set things on foot—which I can turn to good public purpose. If a fair number of the better educated men went to work with the belief that their observations might contribute to the reform of medical doctrine and practice, we should soon see a change for the better. That's my point of view. I hold that by refusing to work with Mr Bulstrode I should be turning my back on an opportunity of making my profession more generally serviceable."

"I quite agree with you," said Dorothea, at once fascinated by the situation sketched in Lydgate's words. "But what is there against Mr Bulstrode? I know that my uncle is friendly with him."

"People don't like his religious tone," said Lydgate, breaking off there.

"That is all the stronger reason for despising such an opposition," said Dorothea, looking at the

affairs of Middlemarch by the light of the great persecutions.

"To put the matter quite fairly, they have other objections to him:—he is masterful and rather unsociable, and he is concerned with trade, which has complaints of its own that I know nothing about. But what has that to do with the question whether it would not be a fine thing to establish here a more valuable hospital than any they have in the county? The immediate motive to the opposition, however, is the fact that Bulstrode has put the medical direction into my hands. Of course I am glad of that. It gives me an opportunity of doing some good work,—and I am aware that I have to justify his choice of me. But the consequence is, that the whole profession in Middlemarch have set themselves tooth and nail against the Hospital, and not only refuse to co-operate themselves, but try to blacken the whole affair and hinder subscriptions."

"How very petty!" exclaimed Dorothea, indignantly.

"I suppose one must expect to fight one's way: there is hardly anything to be done without it. And the ignorance of people about here is stupendous. I don't lay claim to anything but having used some opportunities which have not come

within everybody's reach; but there is no stifling the offence of being young, and a new-comer, and happening to know something more than the old inhabitants. Still, if I believe that I can set going a better method of treatment—if I believe that I can pursue certain observations and inquiries which may be a lasting benefit to medical practice, I should be a base truckler if I allowed any consideration of personal comfort to hinder me. And the course is all the clearer from there being no salary in question to put my persistence in an equivocal light."

"I am glad you have told me this, Mr Lydgate," said Dorothea, cordially. "I feel sure I can help a little. I have some money, and don't know what to do with it—that is often an uncomfortable thought to me. I am sure I can spare two hundred a-year for a grand purpose like this. How happy you must be, to know things that you feel sure will do great good! I wish I could awake with that knowledge every morning. There seems to be so much trouble taken that one can hardly see the good of!"

There was a melancholy cadence in Dorothea's voice as she spoke these last words. But she presently added, more cheerfully, "Pray come to Lowick and tell us more of this. I will mention

the subject to Mr Casaubon. I must hasten home now."

She did mention it that evening, and said that she should like to subscribe two hundred a-year —she had seven hundred a-year, as the equivalent of her own fortune, settled on her at her marriage. Mr Casaubon made no objection beyond a passing remark that the sum might be disproportionate in relation to other good objects, but when Dorothea in her ignorance resisted that suggestion, he acquiesced. He did not care himself about spending money, and was not reluctant to give it. If he ever felt keenly any question of money it was through the medium of another passion than the love of material property.

Dorothea told him that she had seen Lydgate, and recited the gist of her conversation with him about the Hospital. Mr Casaubon did not question her further, but he felt sure that she had wished to know what had passed between Lydgate and himself. "She knows that I know," said the ever-restless voice within; but that increase of tacit knowledge only thrust further off any confidence between them. He distrusted her affection; and what loneliness is more lonely than distrust?

# CHAPTER XLV.

"It is the humour of many heads to extol the days of their forefathers, and declaim against the wickedness of times present. Which notwithstanding they cannot handsomely do, without the borrowed help and satire of times past; condemning the vices of their own times, by the expressions of vices in times which they commend, which cannot but argue the community of vice in both. Horace, therefore, Juvenal, and Persius, were no prophets, although their lines did seem to indigitate and point at our times."—Sir Thomas Browne: *Pseudodoxia Epidemica.*

That opposition to the New Fever Hospital which Lydgate had sketched to Dorothea was, like other oppositions, to be viewed in many different lights. He regarded it as a mixture of jealousy and dunderheaded prejudice. Mr Bulstrode saw in it not only medical jealousy but a determination to thwart himself, prompted mainly by a hatred of that vital religion of which he had striven to be an effectual lay representative—a hatred which certainly found pretexts apart from religion such as were only too easy to find in the entanglements of human action. These might be called the ministerial views. But oppositions have the il-

limitable range of objections at command, which need never stop short at the boundary of knowledge, but can draw for ever on the vasts of ignorance. What the opposition in Middlemarch said about the New Hospital and its administration had certainly a great deal of echo in it, for heaven has taken care that everybody shall not be an originator; but there were differences which represented every social shade between the polished moderation of Dr Minchin and the trenchant assertion of Mrs Dollop, the landlady of the Tankard in Slaughter Lane.

Mrs Dollop became more and more convinced by her own asseveration, that Doctor Lydgate meant to let the people die in the Hospital, if not to poison them, for the sake of cutting them up without saying by your leave or with your leave; for it was a known "fac" that he had wanted to cut up Mrs Goby, as respectable a woman as any in Parley Street, who had money in trust before her marriage—a poor tale for a doctor, who if he was good for anything should know what was the matter with you before you died, and not want to pry into your inside after you were gone. If that was not reason, Mrs Dollop wished to know what was; but there was a prevalent feeling in her audience that her opinion was a bulwark, and that if it

were overthrown there would be no limits to the cutting-up of bodies, as had been well seen in Burke and Hare with their pitch-plaisters—such a hanging business as that was not wanted in Middlemarch!

And let it not be supposed that opinion at the Tankard in Slaughter Lane was unimportant to the medical profession: that old authentic public-house—the original Tankard, known by the name of Dollop's — was the resort of a great Benefit Club, which had some months before put to the vote whether its long-standing medical man, "Doctor Gambit," should not be cashiered in favour of "this Doctor Lydgate," who was capable of performing the most astonishing cures, and rescuing people altogether given up by other practitioners. But the balance had been turned against Lydgate by two members, who for some private reasons held that this power of resuscitating persons as good as dead was an equivocal recommendation, and might interfere with providential favours. In the course of the year, however, there had been a change in the public sentiment, of which the unanimity at Dollop's was an index.

A good deal more than a year ago, before anything was known of Lydgate's skill, the judgments on it had naturally been divided, depending on a

sense of likelihood, situated perhaps in the pit of the stomach or in the pineal gland, and differing in its verdicts, but not the less valuable as a guide in the total deficit of evidence. Patients who had chronic diseases or whose lives had long been worn threadbare, like old Featherstone's, had been at once inclined to try him; also, many who did not like paying their doctor's bills, thought agreeably of opening an account with a new doctor and sending for him without stint if the children's temper wanted a dose, occasions when the old practitioners were often crusty; and all persons thus inclined to employ Lydgate held it likely that he was clever. Some considered that he might do more than others "where there was liver;"—at least there would be no harm in getting a few bottles of "stuff" from him, since if these proved useless it would still be possible to return to the Purifying Pills, which kept you alive, if they did not remove the yellowness. But these were people of minor importance. Good Middlemarch families were of course not going to change their doctor without reason shown; and everybody who had employed Mr Peacock did not feel obliged to accept a new man merely in the character of his successor, objecting that he was "not likely to be equal to Peacock."

But Lydgate had not been long in the town before there were particulars enough reported of him to breed much more specific expectations and to intensify differences into partisanship; some of the particulars being of that impressive order of which the significance is entirely hidden, like a statistical amount without a standard of comparison, but with a note of exclamation at the end. The cubic feet of oxygen yearly swallowed by a full-grown man—what a shudder they might have created in some Middlemarch circles! "Oxygen! nobody knows what that may be—is it any wonder the cholera has got to Dantzic? And yet there are people who say quarantine is no good!"

One of the facts quickly rumoured was that Lydgate did not dispense drugs. This was offensive both to the physicians whose exclusive distinction seemed infringed on, and to the surgeon-apothecaries with whom he ranged himself; and only a little while before, they might have counted on having the law on their side against a man who without calling himself a London-made M.D. dared to ask for pay except as a charge on drugs. But Lydgate had not been experienced enough to foresee that his new course would be even more offensive to the laity; and to Mr Mawmsey, an important grocer in the Top Market, who, though

not one of his patients, questioned him in an affable manner on the subject, he was injudicious enough to give a hasty popular explanation of his reasons, pointing out to Mr Mawmsey that it must lower the character of practitioners, and be a constant injury to the public, if their only mode of getting paid for their work was by their making out long bills for draughts, boluses, and mixtures.

"It is in that way that hard-working medical men may come to be almost as mischievous as quacks," said Lydgate, rather thoughtlessly. "To get their own bread they must overdose the king's lieges; and that's a bad sort of treason, Mr Mawmsey—undermines the constitution in a fatal way."

Mr Mawmsey was not only an overseer (it was about a question of outdoor pay that he was having an interview with Lydgate), he was also asthmatic and had an increasing family: thus, from a medical point of view, as well as from his own, he was an important man; indeed, an exceptional grocer, whose hair was arranged in a flame-like pyramid, and whose retail deference was of the cordial, encouraging kind—jocosely complimentary, and with a certain considerate abstinence from letting out the full force of his mind. It was Mr Mawmsey's friendly jocoseness

in questioning him which had set the tone of Lydgate's reply. But let the wise be warned against too great readiness at explanation: it multiplies the sources of mistake, lengthening the sum for reckoners sure to go wrong.

Lydgate smiled as he ended his speech, putting his foot into the stirrup, and Mr Mawmsey laughed more than he would have done if he had known who the king's lieges were, giving his "Good morning, sir, good morning, sir," with the air of one who saw everything clearly enough. But in truth his views were perturbed. For years he had been paying bills with strictly-made items, so that for every half-crown and eighteenpence he was certain something measurable had been delivered. He had done this with satisfaction, including it among his responsibilities as a husband and father, and regarding a longer bill than usual as a dignity worth mentioning. Moreover, in addition to the massive benefit of the drugs to "self and family," he had enjoyed the pleasure of forming an acute judgment as to their immediate effects, so as to give an intelligent statement for the guidance of Mr Gambit—a practitioner just a little lower in status than Wrench or Toller, and especially esteemed as an accoucheur, of whose ability Mr Mawmsey had

the poorest opinion on all other points, but in doctoring, he was wont to say in an undertone, he placed Gambit above any of them.

Here were deeper reasons than the superficial talk of a new man, which appeared still flimsier in the drawing-room over the shop, when they were recited to Mrs Mawmsey, a woman accustomed to be made much of as a fertile mother,—generally under attendance more or less frequent from Mr Gambit, and occasionally having attacks which required Dr Minchin.

"Does this Mr Lydgate mean to say there is no use in taking medicine?" said Mrs Mawmsey, who was slightly given to drawling. "I should like him to tell me how I could bear up at Fair time, if I didn't take strengthening medicine for a month beforehand. Think of what I have to provide for calling customers, my dear!"—here Mrs Mawmsey turned to an intimate female friend who sat by—"a large veal pie—a stuffed fillet—a round of beef—ham, tongue, *et* cetera, *et* cetera! But what keeps me up best is the pink mixture, not the brown. I wonder, Mr Mawmsey, with *your* experience, you could have patience to listen. *I* should have told him at once that I knew a little better than that."

"No, no, no," said Mr Mawmsey; "I was not

going to tell him my opinion. Hear everything and judge for yourself is my motto. But he didn't know who he was talking to. I was not to be turned on *his* finger. People often pretend to tell me things, when they might as well say, 'Mawmsey, you're a fool.' But I smile at it: I humour everybody's weak place. If physic had done harm to self and family, I should have found it out by this time."

The next day Mr Gambit was told that Lydgate went about saying physic was of no use.

"Indeed!" said he, lifting his eyebrows with cautious surprise. (He was a stout husky man with a large ring on his fourth finger.) "How will he cure his patients, then?"

"That is what *I* say," returned Mrs Mawmsey, who habitually gave weight to her speech by loading her pronouns. "Does *he* suppose that people will pay him only to come and sit with them and go away again?"

Mrs Mawmsey had had a great deal of sitting from Mr Gambit, including very full accounts of his own habits of body and other affairs; but of course he knew there was no innuendo in her remark, since his spare time and personal narrative had never been charged for. So he replied, humorously—

"Well, Lydgate is a good-looking young fellow, you know."

"Not one that *I* would employ," said Mrs Mawmsey. "*Others* may do as they please."

Hence Mr Gambit could go away from the chief grocer's without fear of rivalry, but not without a sense that Lydgate was one of those hypocrites who try to discredit others by advertising their own honesty, and that it might be worth some people's while to show him up. Mr Gambit, however, had a satisfactory practice, much pervaded by the smells of retail trading which suggested the reduction of cash payments to a balance. And he did not think it worth his while to show Lydgate up until he knew how. He had not indeed great resources of education, and had had to work his own way against a good deal of professional contempt; but he made none the worse accoucheur for calling the breathing apparatus "longs."

Other medical men felt themselves more capable. Mr Toller shared the highest practice in the town and belonged to an old Middlemarch family: there were Tollers in the law and everything else above the line of retail trade. Unlike our irascible friend Wrench, he had the easiest way in the world of taking things which might be

supposed to annoy him, being a well-bred, quietly facetious man, who kept a good house, was very fond of a little sporting when he could get it, very friendly with Mr Hawley, and hostile to Mr Bulstrode. It may seem odd that with such pleasant habits he should have been given to the heroic treatment, bleeding and blistering and starving his patients, with a dispassionate disregard to his personal example; but the incongruity favoured the opinion of his ability among his patients, who commonly observed that Mr Toller had lazy manners, but his treatment was as active as you could desire:—no man, said they, carried more seriousness into his profession: he was a little slow in coming, but when he came, he *did* something. He was a great favourite in his own circle, and whatever he implied to any one's disadvantage told doubly from his careless ironical tone.

He naturally got tired of smiling and saying, "Ah!" when he was told that Mr Peacock's successor did not mean to dispense medicines; and Mr Hackbutt one day mentioning it over the wine at a dinner-party, Mr Toller said, laughingly, "Dibbitts will get rid of his stale drugs, then. I'm fond of little Dibbitts—I'm glad he's in luck."

"I see your meaning, Toller," said Mr Hackbutt, "and I am entirely of your opinion. I shall take an opportunity of expressing myself to that effect. A medical man should be responsible for the quality of the drugs consumed by his patients. That is the *rationale* of the system of charging which has hitherto obtained; and nothing is more offensive than this ostentation of reform, where there is no real amelioration."

"Ostentation, Hackbutt?" said Mr Toller, ironically. "I don't see that. A man can't very well be ostentatious of what nobody believes in. There's no reform in the matter: the question is, whether the profit on the drugs is paid to the medical man by the druggist or by the patient, and whether there shall be extra pay under the name of attendance."

"Ah, to be sure; one of your damned new versions of old humbug," said Mr Hawley, passing the decanter to Mr Wrench.

Mr Wrench, generally abstemious, often drank wine rather freely at a party, getting the more irritable in consequence.

"As to humbug, Hawley," he said, "that's a word easy to fling about. But what I contend against is the way medical men are fouling their own nest, and setting up a cry about the country

as if a general practitioner who dispenses drugs couldn't be a gentleman. I throw back the imputation with scorn. I say, the most ungentlemanly trick a man can be guilty of is to come among the members of his profession with innovations which are a libel on their time-honoured procedure. That is my opinion, and I am ready to maintain it against any one who contradicts me." Mr Wrench's voice had become exceedingly sharp.

"I can't oblige you there, Wrench," said Mr Hawley, thrusting his hands into his trouser-pockets.

"My dear fellow," said Mr Toller, striking in pacifically, and looking at Mr Wrench, "the physicians have their toes trodden on more than we have. If you come to dignity, it is a question for Minchin and Sprague."

"Does medical jurisprudence provide nothing against these infringements?" said Mr Hackbutt, with a disinterested desire to offer his lights. "How does the law stand, eh, Hawley?"

"Nothing to be done there," said Mr Hawley. "I looked into it for Sprague. You'd only break your nose against a damned judge's decision."

"Pooh! no need of law," said Mr Toller. "So far as practice is concerned the attempt is an

absurdity. No patient will like it—certainly not Peacock's, who have been used to depletion. Pass the wine."

Mr Toller's prediction was partly verified. If Mr and Mrs Mawmsey, who had no idea of employing Lydgate, were made uneasy by his supposed declaration against drugs, it was inevitable that those who called him in should watch a little anxiously to see whether he did "use all the means he might use" in the case. Even good Mr Powderell, who in his constant charity of interpretation was inclined to esteem Lydgate the more for what seemed a conscientious pursuit of a better plan, had his mind disturbed with doubts during his wife's attack of erysipelas, and could not abstain from mentioning to Lydgate that Mr Peacock on a similar occasion had administered a series of boluses which were not otherwise definable than by their remarkable effect in bringing Mrs Powderell round before Michaelmas from an illness which had begun in a remarkably hot August. At last, indeed, in the conflict between his desire not to hurt Lydgate and his anxiety that no "means" should be lacking, he induced his wife privately to take Widgeon's Purifying Pills, an esteemed Middlemarch medicine, which arrested every disease at the fountain by setting

to work at once upon the blood. This co-operative measure was not to be mentioned to Lydgate, and Mr Powderell himself had no certain reliance on it, only hoping that it might be attended with a blessing.

But in this doubtful stage of Lydgate's introduction he was helped by what we mortals rashly call good fortune. I suppose no doctor ever came newly to a place without making cures that surprised somebody—cures which may be called fortune's testimonials, and deserve as much credit as the written or printed kind. Various patients got well while Lydgate was attending them, some even of dangerous illnesses; and it was remarked that the new doctor with his new ways had at least the merit of bringing people back from the brink of death. The trash talked on such occasions was the more vexatious to Lydgate, because it gave precisely the sort of prestige which an incompetent and unscrupulous man would desire, and was sure to be imputed to him by the simmering dislike of the other medical men as an encouragement on his own part of ignorant puffing. But even his proud outspokenness was checked by the discernment that it was as useless to fight against the interpretations of ignorance as to whip

the fog; and "good fortune" insisted on using those interpretations.

Mrs Larcher having just become charitably concerned about alarming symptoms in her charwoman, when Dr Minchin called, asked him to see her then and there, and give her a certificate for the Infirmary; whereupon after examination he wrote a statement of the case as one of tumour, and recommended the bearer Nancy Nash as an out-patient. Nancy, calling at home on her way to the Infirmary, allowed the staymaker and his wife, in whose attic she lodged, to read Dr Minchin's paper, and by this means became a subject of compassionate conversation in the neighbouring shops of Churchyard Lane as being afflicted with a tumour at first declared to be as large and hard as a duck's egg, but later in the day to be about the size of "your fist." Most hearers agreed that it would have to be cut out, but one had known of oil and another of "squitchineal" as adequate to soften and reduce any lump in the body when taken enough of into the inside—the oil by gradually "soopling," the squitchineal by eating away.

Meanwhile when Nancy presented herself at the Infirmary, it happened to be one of Lydgate's

days there. After questioning and examining her, Lydgate said to the house-surgeon in an undertone, "It's not tumour: it's cramp." He ordered her a blister and some steel mixture, and told her to go home and rest, giving her at the same time a note to Mrs Larcher, who, she said, was her best employer, to testify that she was in need of good food.

But by-and-by Nancy, in her attic, became portentously worse, the supposed tumour having indeed given way to the blister, but only wandered to another region with angrier pain. The staymaker's wife went to fetch Lydgate, and he continued for a fortnight to attend Nancy in her own home, until under his treatment she got quite well and went to work again. But the case continued to be described as one of tumour in Churchyard Lane and other streets—nay, by Mrs Larcher also; for when Lydgate's remarkable cure was mentioned to Dr Minchin, he naturally did not like to say, "The case was not one of tumour, and I was mistaken in describing it as such," but answered, "Indeed! ah! I saw it was a surgical case, not of a fatal kind." He had been inwardly annoyed, however, when he had asked at the Infirmary about the woman he had recommended two days before, to hear from the house-surgeon,

a youngster who was not sorry to vex Minchin with impunity, exactly what had occurred: he privately pronounced that it was indecent in a general practitioner to contradict a physician's diagnosis in that open manner, and afterwards agreed with Wrench that Lydgate was disagreeably inattentive to etiquette. Lydgate did not make the affair a ground for valuing himself or (very particularly) despising Minchin, such rectification of misjudgments often happening among men of equal qualifications. But report took up this amazing case of tumour, not clearly distinguished from cancer, and considered the more awful for being of the wandering sort; till much prejudice against Lydgate's method as to drugs was overcome by the proof of his marvellous skill in the speedy restoration of Nancy Nash after she had been rolling and rolling in agonies from the presence of a tumour both hard and obstinate, but nevertheless compelled to yield.

How could Lydgate help himself? It is offensive to tell a lady when she is expressing her amazement at your skill, that she is altogether mistaken and rather foolish in her amazement. And to have entered into the nature of diseases would only have added to his breaches of medical

propriety. Thus he had to wince under a promise of success given by that ignorant praise which misses every valid quality.

In the case of a more conspicuous patient, Mr Borthrop Trumbull, Lydgate was conscious of having shown himself something better than an everyday doctor, though here too it was an equivocal advantage that he won. The eloquent auctioneer was seized with pneumonia, and having been a patient of Mr Peacock's, sent for Lydgate, whom he had expressed his intention to patronise. Mr Trumbull was a robust man, a good subject for trying the expectant theory upon —watching the course of an interesting disease when left as much as possible to itself, so that the stages might be noted for future guidance; and from the air with which he described his sensations Lydgate surmised that he would like to be taken into his medical man's confidence, and be represented as a partner in his own cure. The auctioneer heard, without much surprise, that his was a constitution which (always with due watching) might be left to itself, so as to offer a beautiful example of a disease with all its phases seen in clear delineation, and that he probably had the rare strength of mind voluntarily to become the test of a rational procedure, and thus make

the disorder of his pulmonary functions a general benefit to society.

Mr Trumbull acquiesced at once, and entered strongly into the view that an illness of his was no ordinary occasion for medical science.

"Never fear, sir; you are not speaking to one who is altogether ignorant of the *vis medicatrix*," said he, with his usual superiority of expression, made rather pathetic by difficulty of breathing. And he went without shrinking through his abstinence from drugs, much sustained by application of the thermometer which implied the importance of his temperature, by the sense that he furnished objects for the microscope, and by learning many new words which seemed suited to the dignity of his secretions. For Lydgate was acute enough to indulge him with a little technical talk.

It may be imagined that Mr Trumbull rose from his couch with a disposition to speak of an illness in which he had manifested the strength of his mind as well as constitution; and he was not backward in awarding credit to the medical man who had discerned the quality of patient he had to deal with. The auctioneer was not an ungenerous man, and liked to give others their due, feeling that he could afford it. He had caught the words "expectant method," and rang

chimes on this and other learned phrases to accompany the assurance that Lydgate "knew a thing or two more than the rest of the doctors—was far better versed in the secrets of his profession than the majority of his compeers."

This had happened before the affair of Fred Vincy's illness had given to Mr Wrench's enmity towards Lydgate more definite personal ground. The new-comer already threatened to be a nuisance in the shape of rivalry, and was certainly a nuisance in the shape of practical criticism or reflections on his hard-driven elders, who had had something else to do than to busy themselves with untried notions. His practice had spread in one or two quarters, and from the first the report of his high family had led to his being pretty generally invited, so that the other medical men had to meet him at dinner in the best houses; and having to meet a man whom you dislike is not observed always to end in a mutual attachment. There was hardly ever so much unanimity among them as in the opinion that Lydgate was an arrogant young fellow, and yet ready for the sake of ultimately predominating to show a crawling subservience to Bulstrode. That Mr Farebrother, whose name was a chief flag of the anti-Bulstrode party, always defended Lydgate and

made a friend of him, was referred to Farebrother's unaccountable way of fighting on both sides.

Here was plenty of preparation for the outburst of professional disgust at the announcement of the laws Mr Bulstrode was laying down for the direction of the New Hospital, which were the more exasperating because there was no present possibility of interfering with his will and pleasure, everybody except Lord Medlicote having refused help towards the building, on the ground that they preferred giving to the Old Infirmary. Mr Bulstrode met all the expenses, and had ceased to be sorry that he was purchasing the right to carry out his notions of improvement without hindrance from prejudiced coadjutors; but he had had to spend large sums, and the building had lingered. Caleb Garth had undertaken it, had failed during its progress, and before the interior fittings were begun had retired from the management of the business; and when referring to the Hospital he often said that however Bulstrode might ring if you tried him, he liked good, solid carpentry and masonry, and had a notion both of drains and chimneys. In fact, the Hospital had become an object of intense interest to Bulstrode, and he would willingly have continued to spare a large yearly sum that he might

rule it dictatorially without any Board; but he had another favourite object which also required some money for its accomplishment: he wished to buy some land in the neighbourhood of Middlemarch, and therefore he wished to get some considerable contributions towards maintaining the Hospital. Meanwhile he framed his plan of management. The Hospital was to be reserved for fever in all its forms; Lydgate was to be chief medical superintendent, that he might have free authority to pursue all comparative investigations which his studies, particularly in Paris, had shown him the importance of, the other medical visitors having a consultative influence, but no power to contravene Lydgate's ultimate decisions; and the general management was to be lodged exclusively in the hands of five directors associated with Mr Bulstrode, who were to have votes in the ratio of their contributions, the Board itself filling up any vacancy in its numbers, and no mob of small contributors being admitted to a share of government.

There was an immediate refusal on the part of every medical man in the town to become a visitor at the Fever Hospital.

"Very well," said Lydgate to Mr Bulstrode, "we have a capital house-surgeon and dispenser, a

clear-headed, neat-handed fellow; we'll get Webbe from Crabsley, as good a country practitioner as any of them, to come over twice a-week, and in case of any exceptional operation, Protheroe will come from Brassing. I must work the harder, that's all, and I have given up my post at the Infirmary. The plan will flourish in spite of them, and then they'll be glad to come in. Things can't last as they are: there must be all sorts of reform soon, and then young fellows may be glad to come and study here." Lydgate was in high spirits.

"I shall not flinch, you may depend upon it, Mr Lydgate," said Mr Bulstrode. "While I see you carrying out high intentions with vigour, you shall have my unfailing support. And I have humble confidence that the blessing which has hitherto attended my efforts against the spirit of evil in this town will not be withdrawn. Suitable directors to assist me I have no doubt of securing. Mr Brooke of Tipton has already given me his concurrence, and a pledge to contribute yearly: he has not specified the sum—probably not a great one. But he will be a useful member of the Board."

A useful member was perhaps to be defined as one who would originate nothing, and always vote with Mr Bulstrode.

The medical aversion to Lydgate was hardly disguised now. Neither Dr Sprague nor Dr Minchin said that he disliked Lydgate's knowledge, or his disposition to improve treatment: what they disliked was his arrogance, which nobody felt to be altogether deniable. They implied that he was insolent, pretentious, and given to that reckless innovation for the sake of noise and show which was the essence of the charlatan.

The word charlatan once thrown on the air could not be let drop. In those days the world was agitated about the wondrous doings of Mr St John Long, "noblemen and gentlemen" attesting his extraction of a fluid like mercury from the temples of a patient.

Mr Toller remarked one day, smilingly, to Mrs Taft, that "Bulstrode had found a man to suit him in Lydgate; a charlatan in religion is sure to like other sorts of charlatans."

"Yes, indeed, I can imagine," said Mrs Taft, keeping the number of thirty stitches carefully in her mind all the while; "there are so many of that sort. I remember Mr Cheshire, with his irons, trying to make people straight when the Almighty had made them crooked."

"No, no," said Mr Toller, "Cheshire was all

right—all fair and above board. But there's St John Long — that's the kind of fellow we call a charlatan, advertising cures in ways nobody knows anything about: a fellow who wants to make a noise by pretending to go deeper than other people. The other day he was pretending to tap a man's brain and get quicksilver out of it."

"Good gracious! what dreadful trifling with people's constitutions!" said Mrs Taft.

After this, it came to be held in various quarters that Lydgate played even with respectable constitutions for his own purposes, and how much more likely that in his flighty experimenting he should make sixes and sevens of hospital patients. Especially it was to be expected, as the landlady of the Tankard had said, that he would recklessly cut up their dead bodies. For Lydgate having attended Mrs Goby, who died apparently of a heart-disease not very clearly expressed in the symptoms, too daringly asked leave of her relatives to open the body, and thus gave an offence quickly spreading beyond Parley Street, where that lady had long resided on an income such as made this association of her body with the victims of Burke and Hare a flagrant insult to her memory.

Affairs were in this stage when Lydgate opened

the subject of the Hospital to Dorothea. We see that he was bearing enmity and silly misconception with much spirit, aware that they were partly created by his good share of success.

"They will not drive me away," he said, talking confidentially in Mr Farebrother's study. "I have got a good opportunity here, for the ends I care most about; and I am pretty sure to get income enough for our wants. By-and-by I shall go on as quietly as possible: I have no seductions now away from home and work. And I am more and more convinced that it will be possible to demonstrate the homogeneous origin of all the tissues. Raspail and others are on the same track, and I have been losing time."

"I have no power of prophecy there," said Mr Farebrother, who had been puffing at his pipe thoughtfully while Lydgate talked; "but as to the hostility in the town, you'll weather it, if you are prudent."

"How am I to be prudent?" said Lydgate. "I just do what comes before me to do. I can't help people's ignorance and spite, any more than Vesalius could. It isn't possible to square one's conduct to silly conclusions which nobody can foresee."

"Quite true; I didn't mean that. I meant

only two things. One is, keep yourself as separable from Bulstrode as you can: of course, you can go on doing good work of your own by his help; but don't get tied. Perhaps it seems like personal feeling in me to say so—and there's a good deal of that, I own — but personal feeling is not always in the wrong if you boil it down to the impressions which make it simply an opinion."

"Bulstrode is nothing to me," said Lydgate, carelessly, "except on public grounds. As to getting very closely united to him, I am not fond enough of him for that. But what was the other thing you meant?" said Lydgate, who was nursing his leg as comfortably as possible, and feeling in no great need of advice.

"Why, this. Take care—*experto crede*—take care not to get hampered about money matters. I know, by a word you let fall one day, that you don't like my playing at cards so much for money. You are right enough there. But try and keep clear of wanting small sums that you haven't got. I am perhaps talking rather superfluously; but a man likes to assume superiority over himself, by holding up his bad example and sermonising on it."

Lydgate took Mr Farebrother's hints very cor-

dially, though he would hardly have borne them from another man. He could not help remembering that he had lately made some debts, but these had seemed inevitable, and he had no intention now to do more than keep house in a simple way. The furniture for which he owed would not want renewing; nor even the stock of wine for a long while.

Many thoughts cheered him at that time—and justly. A man conscious of enthusiasm for worthy aims is sustained under petty hostilities by the memory of great workers who had to fight their way not without wounds, and who hover in his mind as patron saints, invisibly helping. At home, that same evening when he had been chatting with Mr Farebrother, he had his long legs stretched on the sofa, his head thrown back, and his hands clasped behind it according to his favourite ruminating attitude, while Rosamond sat at the piano, and played one tune after another, of which her husband only knew (like the emotional elephant he was!) that they fell in with his mood as if they had been melodious sea-breezes.

There was something very fine in Lydgate's look just then, and any one might have been encouraged to bet on his achievement. In his dark eyes and on his mouth and brow there was

that placidity which comes from the fulness of contemplative thought—the mind not searching, but beholding, and the glance seeming to be filled with what is behind it.

Presently Rosamond left the piano and seated herself on a chair close to the sofa and opposite her husband's face.

"Is that enough music for you, my lord?" she said, folding her hands before her and putting on a little air of meekness.

"Yes, dear, if you are tired," said Lydgate, gently, turning his eyes and resting them on her, but not otherwise moving. Rosamond's presence at that moment was perhaps no more than a spoonful brought to the lake, and her woman's instinct in this matter was not dull.

"What is absorbing you?" she said, leaning forward and bringing her face nearer to his.

He moved his hands and placed them gently behind her shoulders.

"I am thinking of a great fellow, who was about as old as I am three hundred years ago, and had already begun a new era in anatomy."

"I can't guess," said Rosamond, shaking her head. "We used to play at guessing historical characters at Mrs Lemon's, but not anatomists."

"I'll tell you. His name was Vesalius. And

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the only way he could get to know anatomy as he did, was by going to snatch bodies at night, from graveyards and places of execution."

"Oh!" said Rosamond, with a look of disgust in her pretty face, "I am very glad you are not Vesalius. I should have thought he might find some less horrible way than that."

"No, he couldn't," said Lydgate, going on too earnestly to take much notice of her answer. "He could only get a complete skeleton by snatching the whitened bones of a criminal from the gallows, and burying them, and fetching them away by bits secretly, in the dead of night."

"I hope he is not one of your great heroes," said Rosamond, half-playfully, half-anxiously, "else I shall have you getting up in the night to go to St Peter's churchyard. You know how angry you told me the people were about Mrs Goby. You have enemies enough already."

"So had Vesalius, Rosy. No wonder the medical fogies in Middlemarch are jealous, when some of the greatest doctors living were fierce upon Vesalius because they had believed in Galen, and he showed that Galen was wrong. They called him a liar and a poisonous monster. But the facts of the human frame were on his side; and so he got the better of them."

"And what happened to him afterwards?" said Rosamond, with some interest.

"Oh, he had a good deal of fighting to the last. And they did exasperate him enough at one time to make him burn a good deal of his work. Then he got shipwrecked, just as he was coming from Jerusalem to take a great chair at Padua. He died rather miserably."

There was a moment's pause before Rosamond said, "Do you know, Tertius, I often wish you had not been a medical man."

"Nay, Rosy, don't say that," said Lydgate, drawing her closer to him. "That is like saying you wish you had married another man."

"Not at all; you are clever enough for anything: you might easily have been something else. And your cousins at Quallingham all think that you have sunk below them in your choice of a profession."

"The cousins at Quallingham may go to the devil!" said Lydgate, with scorn. "It was like their impudence if they said anything of the sort to you."

"Still," said Rosamond, "I do *not* think it is a nice profession, dear." We know that she had much quiet perseverance in her opinion.

"It is the grandest profession in the world,

Rosamond," said Lydgate, gravely. "And to say that you love me without loving the medical man in me, is like saying that you like eating a peach but don't like its flavour. Don't say it again, dear, it pains me."

"Very well, Doctor Grave-face," said Rosy, dimpling, "I will declare in future that I dote on skeletons, and body-snatchers, and bits of things in phials, and quarrels with everybody, that end in your dying miserably."

"No, no, not so bad as that," said Lydgate, giving up remonstrance and petting her resignedly.

# CHAPTER XLVI.

"Pues no podemos haber aquello que queremos, queramos aquello que podremos."

"Since we cannot get what we like, let us like what we can get."

—*Spanish Proverb.*

WHILE Lydgate, safely married and with the Hospital under his command, felt himself struggling for Medical Reform against Middlemarch, Middlemarch was becoming more and more conscious of the national struggle for another kind of Reform.

By the time that Lord John Russell's measure was being debated in the House of Commons, there was a new political animation in Middlemarch, and a new definition of parties which might show a decided change of balance if a new election came. And there were some who already predicted this event, declaring that a Reform Bill would never be carried by the actual Parliament. This was what Will Ladislaw

dwelt on to Mr Brooke as a reason for congratulation that he had not yet tried his strength at the hustings.

"Things will grow and ripen as if it were a comet year," said Will. "The public temper will soon get to a cometary heat, now the question of Reform has set in. There is likely to be another election before long, and by that time Middlemarch will have got more ideas into its head. What we have to work at now is the 'Pioneer' and political meetings."

"Quite right, Ladislaw; we shall make a new thing of opinion here," said Mr Brooke. "Only I want to keep myself independent about Reform, you know: I don't want to go too far. I want to take up Wilberforce's and Romilly's line, you know, and work at Negro Emancipation, Criminal Law—that kind of thing. But of course I should support Grey."

"If you go in for the principle of Reform, you must be prepared to take what the situation offers," said Will. "If everybody pulled for his own bit against everybody else, the whole question would go to tatters."

"Yes, yes, I agree with you—I quite take that point of view. I should put it in that light. I should support Grey, you know. But I don't

want to change the balance of the constitution, and I don't think Grey would."

"But that is what the country wants," said Will. "Else there would be no meaning in political unions or any other movement that knows what it's about. It wants to have a House of Commons which is not weighted with nominees of the landed class, but with representatives of the other interests. And as to contending for a reform short of that, it is like asking for a bit of an avalanche which has already begun to thunder."

"That is fine, Ladislaw: that is the way to put it. Write that down, now. We must begin to get documents about the feeling of the country, as well as the machine-breaking and general distress."

"As to documents," said Will, "a two-inch card will hold plenty. A few rows of figures are enough to deduce misery from, and a few more will show the rate at which the political determination of the people is growing."

"Good: draw that out a little more at length, Ladislaw. That is an idea, now: write it out in the 'Pioneer.' Put the figures and deduce the misery, you know; and put the other figures and deduce—and so on. You have a way of putting

things. Burke, now:—when I think of Burke, I can't help wishing somebody had a pocket-borough to give you, Ladislaw. You'd never get elected, you know. And we shall always want talent in the House: reform as we will, we shall always want talent. That avalanche and the thunder, now, was really a little like Burke. I want that sort of thing—not ideas, you know, but a way of putting them."

"Pocket-boroughs would be a fine thing," said Ladislaw, "if they were always in the right pocket, and there were always a Burke at hand."

Will was not displeased with that complimentary comparison, even from Mr Brooke; for it is a little too trying to human flesh to be conscious of expressing one's self better than others and never to have it noticed, and in the general dearth of admiration for the right thing, even a chance bray of applause falling exactly in time is rather fortifying. Will felt that his literary refinements were usually beyond the limits of Middlemarch perception; nevertheless, he was beginning thoroughly to like the work of which when he began he had said to himself rather languidly, "Why not?"—and he studied the political situation with as ardent an interest as he had ever given to poetic metres or mediævalism. It is undeniable that but for the

desire to be where Dorothea was, and perhaps the want of knowing what else to do, Will would not at this time have been meditating on the needs of the English people or criticising English statesmanship: he would probably have been rambling in Italy sketching plans for several dramas, trying prose and finding it too jejune, trying verse and finding it too artificial, beginning to copy "bits" from old pictures, leaving off because they were "no good," and observing that, after all, self-culture was the principal point; while in politics he would have been sympathising warmly with liberty and progress in general. Our sense of duty must often wait for some work which shall take the place of dilettanteism and make us feel that the quality of our action is not a matter of indifference.

Ladislaw had now accepted his bit of work, though it was not that indeterminate loftiest thing which he had once dreamed of as alone worthy of continuous effort. His nature warmed easily in the presence of subjects which were visibly mixed with life and action, and the easily-stirred rebellion in him helped the glow of public spirit. In spite of Mr Casaubon and the banishment from Lowick, he was rather happy; getting a great deal of fresh knowledge in a vivid way and for practical purposes, and making the 'Pio-

neer' celebrated as far as Brassing (never mind the smallness of the area; the writing was not worse than much that reaches the four corners of the earth).

Mr Brooke was occasionally irritating; but Will's impatience was relieved by the division of his time between visits to the Grange and retreats to his Middlemarch lodgings, which gave variety to his life.

"Shift the pegs a little," he said to himself, "and Mr Brooke might be in the Cabinet, while I was Under-Secretary. That is the common order of things: the little waves make the large ones and are of the same pattern. I am better here than in the sort of life Mr Casaubon would have trained me for, where the doing would be all laid down by a precedent too rigid for me to react upon. I don't care for prestige or high pay."

As Lydgate had said of him, he was a sort of gypsy, rather enjoying the sense of belonging to no class; he had a feeling of romance in his position, and a pleasant consciousness of creating a little surprise wherever he went. That sort of enjoyment had been disturbed when he had felt some new distance between himself and Dorothea in their accidental meeting at Lydgate's, and his irritation had gone out towards Mr Casaubon, who had de-

clared beforehand that Will would lose caste. "I never had any caste," he would have said, if that prophecy had been uttered to him, and the quick blood would have come and gone like breath in his transparent skin. But it is one thing to like defiance, and another thing to like its consequences.

Meanwhile, the town opinion about the new editor of the 'Pioneer' was tending to confirm Mr Casaubon's view. Will's relationship in that distinguished quarter did not, like Lydgate's high connections, serve as an advantageous introduction: if it was rumoured that young Ladislaw was Mr Casaubon's nephew or cousin, it was also rumoured that "Mr Casaubon would have nothing to do with him."

"Brooke has taken him up," said Mr Hawley, "because that is what no man in his senses could have expected. Casaubon has devilish good reasons, you may be sure, for turning the cold shoulder on a young fellow whose bringing-up he paid for. Just like Brooke—one of those fellows who would praise a cat to sell a horse."

And some oddities of Will's, more or less poetical, appeared to support Mr Keck, the editor of the 'Trumpet,' in asserting that Ladislaw, if the truth were known, was not only a Polish emissary but crack-brained, which accounted for the preter-

natural quickness and glibness of his speech when he got on to a platform—as he did whenever he had an opportunity, speaking with a facility which cast reflections on solid Englishmen generally. It was disgusting to Keck to see a strip of a fellow, with light curls round his head, get up and speechify by the hour against institutions "which had existed when he was in his cradle." And in a leading article of the 'Trumpet,' Keck characterised Ladislaw's speech at a Reform meeting as "the violence of an energumen—a miserable effort to shroud in the brilliancy of fireworks the daring of irresponsible statements and the poverty of a knowledge which was of the cheapest and most recent description."

"That was a rattling article yesterday, Keck," said Dr Sprague, with sarcastic intentions. "But what is an energumen?"

"Oh, a term that came up in the French Revolution," said Keck.

This dangerous aspect of Ladislaw was strangely contrasted with other habits which became matter of remark. He had a fondness, half artistic, half affectionate, for little children—the smaller they were on tolerably active legs, and the funnier their clothing, the better Will liked to surprise and please them. We know that in Rome he was

given to ramble about among the poor people, and the taste did not quit him in Middlemarch.

He had somehow picked up a troop of droll children, little hatless boys with their galligaskins much worn and scant shirting to hang out, little girls who tossed their hair out of their eyes to look at him, and guardian brothers at the mature age of seven. This troop he had led out on gypsy excursions to Halsell Wood at nutting-time, and since the cold weather had set in he had taken them on a clear day to gather sticks for a bonfire in the hollow of a hillside, where he drew out a small feast of gingerbread for them, and improvised a Punch-and-Judy drama with some private home-made puppets. Here was one oddity. Another was, that in houses where he got friendly, he was given to stretch himself at full length on the rug while he talked, and was apt to be discovered in this attitude by occasional callers for whom such an irregularity was likely to confirm the notions of his dangerously mixed blood and general laxity.

But Will's articles and speeches naturally recommended him in families which the new strictness of party division had marked off on the side of Reform. He was invited to Mr Bulstrode's; but here he could not lie down on the rug, and Mrs Bulstrode felt that his mode of talking about

Catholic countries, as if there were any truce with Antichrist, illustrated the usual tendency to unsoundness in intellectual men.

At Mr Farebrother's, however, whom the irony of events had brought on the same side with Bulstrode in the national movement, Will became a favourite with the ladies; especially with little Miss Noble, whom it was one of his oddities to escort when he met her in the street with her little basket, giving her his arm in the eyes of the town, and insisting on going with her to pay some call where she distributed her small filchings from her own share of sweet things.

But the house where he visited oftenest and lay most on the rug was Lydgate's. The two men were not at all alike, but they agreed none the worse. Lydgate was abrupt but not irritable, taking little notice of megrims in healthy people; and Ladislaw did not usually throw away his susceptibilities on those who took no notice of them. With Rosamond, on the other hand, he pouted and was wayward—nay, often uncomplimentary, much to her inward surprise; nevertheless he was gradually becoming necessary to her entertainment by his companionship in her music, his varied talk, and his freedom from the grave preoccupation which, with all her husband's ten-

derness and indulgence, often made his manners unsatisfactory to her, and confirmed her dislike of the medical profession.

Lydgate, inclined to be sarcastic on the superstitious faith of the people in the efficacy of "the bill," while nobody cared about the low state of pathology, sometimes assailed Will with troublesome questions. One evening in March, Rosamond in her cherry-coloured dress with swansdown trimming about the throat sat at the tea-table; Lydgate, lately come in tired from his outdoor work, was seated sideways on an easy-chair by the fire with one leg over the elbow, his brow looking a little troubled as his eyes rambled over the columns of the 'Pioneer,' while Rosamond, having noticed that he was perturbed, avoided looking at him, and inwardly thanked heaven that she herself had not a moody disposition. Will Ladislaw was stretched on the rug contemplating the curtain-pole abstractedly, and humming very low the notes of "When first I saw thy face;" while the house spaniel, also stretched out with small choice of room, looked from between his paws at the usurper of the rug with silent but strong objection.

Rosamond bringing Lydgate his cup of tea, he threw down the paper, and said to Will, who had started up and gone to the table—

"It's no use your puffing Brooke as a reforming landlord, Ladislaw: they only pick the more holes in his coat in the 'Trumpet.'"

"No matter; those who read the 'Pioneer' don't read the 'Trumpet,'" said Will, swallowing his tea and walking about. "Do you suppose the public reads with a view to its own conversion? We should have a witches' brewing with a vengeance then—'Mingle, mingle, mingle, mingle, You that mingle may'—and nobody would know which side he was going to take."

"Farebrother says, he doesn't believe Brooke would get elected if the opportunity came: the very men who profess to be for him would bring another member out of the bag at the right moment."

"There's no harm in trying. It's good to have resident members."

"Why?" said Lydgate, who was much given to use that inconvenient word in a curt tone.

"They represent the local stupidity better," said Will, laughing, and shaking his curls; "and they are kept on their best behaviour in the neighbourhood. Brooke is not a bad fellow, but he has done some good things on his estate that he never would have done but for this Parliamentary bite."

"He's not fit to be a public man," said Lydgate,

with contemptuous decision. "He would disappoint everybody who counted on him: I can see that at the Hospital. Only, there Bulstrode holds the reins and drives him."

"That depends on how you fix your standard of public men," said Will. "He's good enough for the occasion: when the people have made up their mind as they are making it up now, they don't want a man—they only want a vote."

"That is the way with you political writers, Ladislaw—crying up a measure as if it were a universal cure, and crying up men who are a part of the very disease that wants curing."

"Why not? Men may help to cure themselves off the face of the land without knowing it," said Will, who could find reasons impromptu, when he had not thought of a question beforehand.

"That is no excuse for encouraging the superstitious exaggeration of hopes about this particular measure, helping the cry to swallow it whole and to send up voting popinjays who are good for nothing but to carry it. You go against rottenness, and there is nothing more thoroughly rotten than making people believe that society can be cured by a political hocus-pocus."

"That's very fine, my dear fellow. But your cure must begin somewhere, and put it that a

thousand things which debase a population can never be reformed without this particular reform to begin with. Look what Stanley said the other day — that the House had been tinkering long enough at small questions of bribery, inquiring whether this or that voter has had a guinea when everybody knows that the seats have been sold wholesale. Wait for wisdom and conscience in public agents—fiddlestick! The only conscience we can trust to is the massive sense of wrong in a class, and the best wisdom that will work is the wisdom of balancing claims. That's my text—which side is injured? I support the man who supports their claims; not the virtuous upholder of the wrong."

"That general talk about a particular case is mere question-begging, Ladislaw. When I say, I go in for the dose that cures, it doesn't follow that I go in for opium in a given case of gout."

"I am not begging the question we are upon—whether we are to try for nothing till we find immaculate men to work with. Should you go on that plan? If there were one man who would carry you a medical reform and another who would oppose it, should you inquire which had the better motives or even the better brains?"

"Oh, of course," said Lydgate, seeing himself

checkmated by a move which he had often used himself, "if one did not work with such men as are at hand, things must come to a dead-lock. Suppose the worst opinion in the town about Bulstrode were a true one, that would not make it less true that he has the sense and the resolution to do what I think ought to be done in the matters I know and care most about; but that is the only ground on which I go with him," Lydgate added rather proudly, bearing in mind Mr Farebrother's remarks. "He is nothing to me otherwise; I would not cry him up on any personal ground—I would keep clear of that."

"Do you mean that I cry up Brooke on any personal ground?" said Will Ladislaw, nettled, and turning sharp round. For the first time he felt offended with Lydgate; not the less so, perhaps, because he would have declined any close inquiry into the growth of his relation to Mr Brooke.

"Not at all," said Lydgate, "I was simply explaining my own action. I meant that a man may work for a special end with others whose motives and general course are equivocal, if he is quite sure of his personal independence, and that he is not working for his private interest—either place or money."

"Then, why don't you extend your liberality

to others?" said Will, still nettled. "My personal independence is as important to me as yours is to you. You have no more reason to imagine that I have personal expectations from Brooke, than I have to imagine that you have personal expectations from Bulstrode. Motives are points of honour, I suppose—nobody can prove them. But as to money and place in the world," Will ended, tossing back his head, "I think it is pretty clear that I am not determined by considerations of that sort."

"You quite mistake me, Ladislaw," said Lydgate, surprised. He had been preoccupied with his own vindication, and had been blind to what Ladislaw might infer on his own account. "I beg your pardon for unintentionally annoying you. In fact, I should rather attribute to you a romantic disregard of your own worldly interests. On the political question, I referred simply to intellectual bias."

"How very unpleasant you both are this evening!" said Rosamond. "I cannot conceive why money should have been referred to. Politics and medicine are sufficiently disagreeable to quarrel upon. You can both of you go on quarrelling with all the world and with each other on those two topics."

Rosamond looked mildly neutral as she said this, rising to ring the bell, and then crossing to her work-table.

"Poor Rosy!" said Lydgate, putting out his hand to her as she was passing him. "Disputation is not amusing to cherubs. Have some music. Ask Ladislaw to sing with you."

When Will was gone Rosamond said to her husband, "What put you out of temper this evening, Tertius?"

"Me? It was Ladislaw who was out of temper. He is like a bit of tinder."

"But I mean, before that. Something had vexed you before you came in, you looked cross. And that made you begin to dispute with Mr Ladislaw. You hurt me very much when you look so, Tertius."

"Do I? Then I am a brute," said Lydgate, caressing her penitently.

"What vexed you?"

"Oh, outdoor things—business."

It was really a letter insisting on the payment of a bill for furniture. But Rosamond was expecting to have a baby, and Lydgate wished to save her from any perturbation.

# CHAPTER XLVII.

Was never true love loved in vain,
For truest love is highest gain.
No art can make it: it must spring
Where elements are fostering.
So in heaven's spot and hour
Springs the little native flower,
Downward root and upward eye,
Shapen by the earth and sky.

It happened to be on a Saturday evening that Will Ladislaw had that little discussion with Lydgate. Its effect when he went to his own rooms was to make him sit up half the night, thinking over again, under a new irritation, all that he had before thought of his having settled in Middlemarch and harnessed himself with Mr Brooke. Hesitations before he had taken the step had since turned into susceptibility to every hint that he would have been wiser not to take it; and hence came his heat towards Lydgate—a heat which still kept him restless. Was he not making a fool of himself?—and at a time when he was

more than ever conscious of being something better than a fool? And for what end?

Well, for no definite end. True, he had dreamy visions of possibilities: there is no human being who having both passions and thoughts does not think in consequence of his passions—does not find images rising in his mind which soothe the passion with hope or sting it with dread. But this, which happens to us all, happens to some with a wide difference; and Will was not one of those whose wit "keeps the roadway:" he had his bypaths where there were little joys of his own choosing, such as gentlemen cantering on the highroad might have thought rather idiotic. The way in which he made a sort of happiness for himself out of his feeling for Dorothea was an example of this. It may seem strange, but it is the fact, that the ordinary vulgar vision of which Mr Casaubon suspected him—namely, that Dorothea might become a widow, and that the interest he had established in her mind might turn into acceptance of him as a husband—had no tempting, arresting power over him: he did not live in the scenery of such an event, and follow it out, as we all do with that imagined "otherwise" which is our practical heaven. It was not only that he was unwilling to entertain thoughts which could

be accused of baseness, and was already uneasy in the sense that he had to justify himself from the charge of ingratitude—the latent consciousness of many other barriers between himself and Dorothea besides the existence of her husband, had helped to turn away his imagination from speculating on what might befall Mr Casaubon. And there were yet other reasons. Will, we know, could not bear the thought of any flaw appearing in his crystal: he was at once exasperated and delighted by the calm freedom with which Dorothea looked at him and spoke to him, and there was something so exquisite in thinking of her just as she was, that he could not long for a change which must somehow change her. Do we not shun the street version of a fine melody?—or shrink from the news that the rarity—some bit of chiselling or engraving perhaps—which we have dwelt on even with exultation in the trouble it has cost us to snatch glimpses of it, is really not an uncommon thing, and may be obtained as an everyday possession? Our good depends on the quality and breadth of our emotion; and to Will, a creature who cared little for what are called the solid things of life and greatly for its subtler influences, to have within him such a feeling as he had towards Dorothea, was like the inheritance of a fortune. What

others might have called the futility of his passion, made an additional delight for his imagination: he was conscious of a generous movement, and of verifying in his own experience that higher love-poetry which had charmed his fancy. Dorothea, he said to himself, was for ever enthroned in his soul: no other woman could sit higher than her footstool; and if he could have written out in immortal syllables the effect she wrought within him, he might have boasted after the example of old Drayton, that—

> "Queens hereafter might be glad to live
> Upon the alms of her superfluous praise."

But this result was questionable. And what else could he do for Dorothea? What was his devotion worth to her? It was impossible to tell. He would not go out of her reach. He saw no creature among her friends to whom he could believe that she spoke with the same simple confidence as to him. She had once said that she would like him to stay; and stay he would, whatever fire-breathing dragons might hiss around her.

This had always been the conclusion of Will's hesitations. But he was not without contradictoriness and rebellion even towards his own resolve. He had often got irritated, as he was on this particular night, by some outside demonstra-

tion that his public exertions with Mr Brooke as a chief could not seem as heroic as he would like them to be, and this was always associated with the other ground of irritation—that notwithstanding his sacrifice of dignity for Dorothea's sake, he could hardly ever see her. Whereupon, not being able to contradict these unpleasant facts, he contradicted his own strongest bias and said, "I am a fool."

Nevertheless, since the inward debate necessarily turned on Dorothea, he ended, as he had done before, only by getting a livelier sense of what her presence would be to him; and suddenly reflecting that the morrow would be Sunday, he determined to go to Lowick Church and see her. He slept upon that idea, but when he was dressing in the rational morning light, Objection said—

"That will be a virtual defiance of Mr Casaubon's prohibition to visit Lowick, and Dorothea will be displeased."

"Nonsense!" argued Inclination, "it would be too monstrous for him to hinder me from going out to a pretty country church on a spring morning. And Dorothea will be glad."

"It will be clear to Mr Casaubon that you have come either to annoy him or to see Dorothea."

"It is not true that I go to annoy him, and why should I not go to see Dorothea? Is he to have everything to himself and be always comfortable? Let him smart a little, as other people are obliged to do. I have always liked the quaintness of the church and congregation; besides, I know the Tuckers: I shall go into their pew."

Having silenced Objection by force of unreason, Will walked to Lowick as if he had been on the way to Paradise, crossing Halsell Common and skirting the wood, where the sunlight fell broadly under the budding boughs, bringing out the beauties of moss and lichen, and fresh green growths piercing the brown. Everything seemed to know that it was Sunday, and to approve of his going to Lowick Church. Will easily felt happy when nothing crossed his humour, and by this time the thought of vexing Mr Casaubon had become rather amusing to him, making his face break into its merry smile, pleasant to see as the breaking of sunshine on the water—though the occasion was not exemplary. But most of us are apt to settle within ourselves that the man who blocks our way is odious, and not to mind causing him a little of the disgust which his personality excites in ourselves. Will went along with a small book under his arm and a hand in

each side-pocket, never reading, but chanting a little, as he made scenes of what would happen in church and coming out. He was experimenting in tunes to suit some words of his own, sometimes trying a ready-made melody, sometimes improvising. The words were not exactly a hymn, but they certainly fitted his Sunday experience :—

O me, O me, what frugal cheer
  My love doth feed upon!
A touch, a ray, that is not here,
  A shadow that is gone:

A dream of breath that might be near,
  An inly-echoed tone,
The thought that one may think me dear,
  The place where one was known,

The tremor of a banished fear,
  An ill that was not done—
O me, O me, what frugal cheer
  My love doth feed upon!

Sometimes, when he took off his hat, shaking his head backward, and showing his delicate throat as he sang, he looked like an incarnation of the spring whose spirit filled the air—a bright creature, abundant in uncertain promises.

The bells were still ringing when he got to Lowick, and he went into the curate's pew before any one else arrived there. But he was still left alone in it when the congregation had assembled.

The curate's pew was opposite the rector's at the entrance of the small chancel, and Will had time to fear that Dorothea might not come while he looked round at the group of rural faces which made the congregation from year to year within the white-washed walls and dark old pews, hardly with more change than we see in the boughs of a tree which breaks here and there with age, but yet has young shoots. Mr Rigg's frog-face was something alien and unaccountable, but notwithstanding this shock to the order of things, there were still the Waules and the rural stock of the Powderells in their pews side by side; brother Samuel's cheek had the same purple round as ever, and the three generations of decent cottagers came as of old with a sense of duty to their betters generally — the smaller children regarding Mr Casaubon, who wore the black gown and mounted to the highest box, as probably the chief of all betters, and the one most awful if offended. Even in 1831 Lowick was at peace, not more agitated by Reform than by the solemn tenor of the Sunday sermon. The congregation had been used to seeing Will at church in former days, and no one took much note of him except the quire, who expected him to make a figure in the singing.

Dorothea did at last appear on this quaint

background, walking up the short aisle in her white beaver bonnet and grey cloak—the same she had worn in the Vatican. Her face being, from her entrance, towards the chancel, even her short-sighted eyes soon discerned Will, but there was no outward show of her feeling except a slight paleness and a grave bow as she passed him. To his own surprise Will felt suddenly uncomfortable, and dared not look at her after they had bowed to each other. Two minutes later, when Mr Casaubon came out of the vestry, and, entering the pew, seated himself in face of Dorothea, Will felt his paralysis more complete. He could look nowhere except at the quire in the little gallery over the vestry-door: Dorothea was perhaps pained, and he had made a wretched blunder. It was no longer amusing to vex Mr Casaubon, who had the advantage probably of watching him and seeing that he dared not turn his head. Why had he not imagined this beforehand?—but he could not expect that he should sit in that square pew alone, unrelieved by any Tuckers, who had apparently departed from Lowick altogether, for a new clergyman was in the desk. Still he called himself stupid now for not foreseeing that it would be impossible for him to look towards Dorothea—nay, that she might feel his coming an impertinence.

There was no delivering himself from his cage, however; and Will found his places and looked at his book as if he had been a schoolmistress, feeling that the morning service had never been so immeasurably long before, that he was utterly ridiculous, out of temper, and miserable. This was what a man got by worshipping the sight of a woman! The clerk observed with surprise that Mr Ladislaw did not join in the tune of Hanover, and reflected that he might have a cold.

Mr Casaubon did not preach that morning, and there was no change in Will's situation until the blessing had been pronounced and every one rose. It was the fashion at Lowick for "the betters" to go out first. With a sudden determination to break the spell that was upon him, Will looked straight at Mr Casaubon. But that gentleman's eyes were on the button of the pew-door, which he opened, allowing Dorothea to pass, and following her immediately without raising his eyelids. Will's glance had caught Dorothea's as she turned out of the pew, and again she bowed, but this time with a look of agitation, as if she were repressing tears. Will walked out after them, but they went on toward the little gate leading out of the churchyard into the shrubbery, never looking round.

It was impossible for him to follow them, and he could only walk back sadly at mid-day along the same road which he had trodden hopefully in the morning. The lights were all changed for him both without and within.

# CHAPTER XLVIII.

Surely the golden hours are turning grey
And dance no more, and vainly strive to run:
I see their white locks streaming in the wind—
Each face is haggard as it looks at me,
Slow turning in the constant clasping round
Storm-driven.

DOROTHEA'S distress when she was leaving the church came chiefly from the perception that Mr Casaubon was determined not to speak to his cousin, and that Will's presence at church had served to mark more strongly the alienation between them. Will's coming seemed to her quite excusable, nay, she thought it an amiable movement in him towards a reconciliation which she herself had been constantly wishing for. He had probably imagined, as she had, that if Mr Casaubon and he could meet easily, they would shake hands and friendly intercourse might return. But now Dorothea felt quite robbed of that hope. Will was banished further than ever, for Mr

Casaubon must have been newly imbittered by this thrusting upon him of a presence which he refused to recognise.

He had not been very well that morning, suffering from some difficulty in breathing, and had not preached in consequence; she was not surprised, therefore, that he was nearly silent at luncheon, still less that he made no allusion to Will Ladislaw. For her own part she felt that she could never again introduce that subject. They usually spent apart the hours between luncheon and dinner on a Sunday; Mr Casaubon in the library dozing chiefly, and Dorothea in her boudoir, where she was wont to occupy herself with some of her favourite books. There was a little heap of them on the table in the bow-window—of various sorts, from Herodotus, which she was learning to read with Mr Casaubon, to her old companion Pascal, and Keble's 'Christian Year.' But to-day she opened one after another, and could read none of them. Everything seemed dreary: the portents before the birth of Cyrus—Jewish antiquities—oh dear!—devout epigrams—the sacred chime of favourite hymns—all alike were as flat as tunes beaten on wood: even the spring flowers and the grass had a dull shiver in them under the afternoon clouds that hid the sun

fitfully; even the sustaining thoughts which had become habits seemed to have in them the weariness of long future days in which she would still live with them for her sole companions. It was another or rather a fuller sort of companionship that poor Dorothea was hungering for, and the hunger had grown from the perpetual effort demanded by her married life. She was always trying to be what her husband wished, and never able to repose on his delight in what she was. The thing that she liked, that she spontaneously cared to have, seemed to be always excluded from her life; for if it was only granted and not shared by her husband it might as well have been denied. About Will Ladislaw there had been a difference between them from the first, and it had ended, since Mr Casaubon had so severely repulsed Dorothea's strong feeling about his claims on the family property, by her being convinced that she was in the right and her husband in the wrong, but that she was helpless. This afternoon the helplessness was more wretchedly benumbing than ever: she longed for objects who could be dear to her, and to whom she could be dear. She longed for work which would be directly beneficent like the sunshine and the rain, and now it appeared that she was to live more and more in a virtual tomb,

where there was the apparatus of a ghastly labour producing what would never see the light. To-day she had stood at the door of the tomb and seen Will Ladislaw receding into the distant world of warm activity and fellowship—turning his face towards her as he went.

Books were of no use. Thinking was of no use. It was Sunday, and she could not have the carriage to go to Celia, who had lately had a baby. There was no refuge now from spiritual emptiness and discontent, and Dorothea had to bear her bad mood, as she would have borne a headache.

After dinner, at the hour when she usually began to read aloud, Mr Casaubon proposed that they should go into the library, where, he said, he had ordered a fire and lights. He seemed to have revived, and to be thinking intently.

In the library Dorothea observed that he had newly arranged a row of his note-books on a table, and now he took up and put into her hand a well-known volume, which was a table of contents to all the others.

"You will oblige me, my dear," he said, seating himself, "if instead of other reading this evening, you will go through this aloud, pencil in hand, and at each point where I say 'mark,' will make a cross with your pencil. This is the first step in

a sifting process which I have long had in view, and as we go on I shall be able to indicate to you certain principles of selection whereby you will, I trust, have an intelligent participation in my purpose."

This proposal was only one more sign added to many since his memorable interview with Lydgate, that Mr Casaubon's original reluctance to let Dorothea work with him had given place to the contrary disposition, namely, to demand much interest and labour from her.

After she had read and marked for two hours, he said, "We will take the volume up-stairs—and the pencil, if you please—and in case of reading in the night, we can pursue this task. It is not wearisome to you, I trust, Dorothea?"

"I prefer always reading what you like best to hear," said Dorothea, who told the simple truth; for what she dreaded was to exert herself in reading or anything else which left him as joyless as ever.

It was a proof of the force with which certain characteristics in Dorothea impressed those around her, that her husband, with all his jealousy and suspicion, had gathered implicit trust in the integrity of her promises, and her power of devoting herself to her idea of the right and best. Of

late he had begun to feel that these qualities were a peculiar possession for himself, and he wanted to engross them.

The reading in the night did come. Dorothea in her young weariness had slept soon and fast: she was awakened by a sense of light, which seemed to her at first like a sudden vision of sunset after she had climbed a steep hill: she opened her eyes, and saw her husband wrapt in his warm gown seating himself in the arm-chair near the fireplace where the embers were still glowing. He had lit two candles, expecting that Dorothea would awake, but not liking to rouse her by more direct means.

"Are you ill, Edward?" she said, rising immediately.

"I felt some uneasiness in a reclining posture. I will sit here for a time." She threw wood on the fire, wrapped herself up, and said, "You would like me to read to you?"

"You would oblige me greatly by doing so, Dorothea," said Mr Casaubon, with a shade more meekness than usual in his polite manner. "I am wakeful: my mind is remarkably lucid."

"I fear that the excitement may be too great for you," said Dorothea, remembering Lydgate's cautions.

"No, I am not conscious of undue excitement. Thought is easy." Dorothea dared not insist, and she read for an hour or more on the same plan as she had done in the evening, but getting over the pages with more quickness. Mr Casaubon's mind was more alert, and he seemed to anticipate what was coming after a very slight verbal indication, saying, "That will do—mark that"—or "Pass on to the next head—I omit the second excursus on Crete." Dorothea was amazed to think of the bird-like speed with which his mind was surveying the ground where it had been creeping for years. At last he said—

"Close the book now, my dear. We will resume our work to-morrow. I have deferred it too long, and would gladly see it completed. But you observe that the principle on which my selection is made, is to give adequate, and not disproportionate illustration to each of the theses enumerated in my Introduction, as at present sketched. You have perceived that distinctly, Dorothea?"

"Yes," said Dorothea, rather tremulously. She felt sick at heart.

"And now I think that I can take some repose," said Mr Casaubon. He lay down again and begged her to put out the lights. When she

had lain down too, and there was a darkness only broken by a dull glow on the hearth, he said—

"Before I sleep, I have a request to make, Dorothea."

"What is it?" said Dorothea, with dread in her mind.

"It is that you will let me know, deliberately, whether, in case of my death, you will carry out my wishes: whether you will avoid doing what I should deprecate, and apply yourself to do what I should desire."

Dorothea was not taken by surprise: many incidents had been leading her to the conjecture of some intention on her husband's part which might make a new yoke for her. She did not answer immediately.

"You refuse?" said Mr Casaubon, with more edge in his tone.

"No, I do not yet refuse," said Dorothea in a clear voice, the need of freedom asserting itself within her; "but it is too solemn—I think it is not right—to make a promise when I am ignorant what it will bind me to. Whatever affection prompted I would do without promising."

"But you would use your own judgment: I ask you to obey mine; you refuse."

"No, dear, no!" said Dorothea, beseechingly, crushed by opposing fears. "But may I wait and reflect a little while? I desire with my whole soul to do what will comfort you; but I cannot give any pledge suddenly—still less a pledge to do I know not what."

"You cannot then confide in the nature of my wishes?"

"Grant me till to-morrow," said Dorothea, beseechingly.

"Till to-morrow then," said Mr Casaubon.

Soon she could hear that he was sleeping, but there was no more sleep for her. While she constrained herself to lie still lest she should disturb him, her mind was carrying on a conflict in which imagination ranged its forces first on one side and then on the other. She had no presentiment that the power which her husband wished to establish over her future action had relation to anything else than his work. But it was clear enough to her that he would expect her to devote herself to sifting those mixed heaps of material, which were to be the doubtful illustration of principles still more doubtful. The poor child had become altogether unbelieving as to the trustworthiness of that Key which had made

the ambition and the labour of her husband's life. It was not wonderful that, in spite of her small instruction, her judgment in this matter was truer than his: for she looked with unbiassed comparison and healthy sense at probabilities on which he had risked all his egoism. And now she pictured to herself the days, and months, and years which she must spend in sorting what might be called shattered mummies, and fragments of a tradition which was itself a mosaic, wrought from crushed ruins—sorting them as food for a theory which was already withered in the birth like an elfin child. Doubtless a vigorous error vigorously pursued has kept the embryos of truth a-breathing: the quest of gold being at the same time a questioning of substances, the body of chemistry is prepared for its soul, and Lavoisier is born. But Mr Casaubon's theory of the elements which made the seed of all tradition was not likely to bruise itself unawares against discoveries: it floated among flexible conjectures no more solid than those etymologies which seemed strong because of likeness in sound, until it was shown that likeness in sound made them impossible: it was a method of interpretation which was not tested by the necessity of forming anything which had sharper collisions than an elaborate notion of Gog and

Magog: it was as free from interruption as a plan for threading the stars together. And Dorothea had so often had to check her weariness and impatience over this questionable riddle-guessing, as it revealed itself to her instead of the fellowship in high knowledge which was to make life worthier! She could understand well enough now why her husband had come to cling to her as possibly the only hope left that his labours would ever take a shape in which they could be given to the world. At first it had seemed that he wished to keep even her aloof from any close knowledge of what he was doing; but gradually the terrible stringency of human need—the prospect of a too speedy death——

And here Dorothea's pity turned from her own future to her husband's past—nay, to his present hard struggle with a lot which had grown out of that past: the lonely labour, the ambition breathing hardly under the pressure of self-distrust; the goal receding, and the heavier limbs; and now at last the sword visibly trembling above him! And had she not wished to marry him that she might help him in his life's labour?—But she had thought the work was to be something greater, which she could serve in devoutly for its own sake. Was it right, even to soothe his grief—

would it be possible, even if she promised—to work as in a treadmill fruitlessly?

And yet, could she deny him? Could she say, "I refuse to content this pining hunger?" It would be refusing to do for him dead, what she was almost sure to do for him living. If he lived as Lydgate had said he might, for fifteen years or more, her life would certainly be spent in helping him and obeying him.

Still, there was a deep difference between that devotion to the living and that indefinite promise of devotion to the dead. While he lived, he could claim nothing that she would not still be free to remonstrate against, and even to refuse. But—the thought passed through her mind more than once, though she could not believe in it—might he not mean to demand something more from her than she had been able to imagine, since he wanted her pledge to carry out his wishes without telling her exactly what they were? No; his heart was bound up in his work only: that was the end for which his failing life was to be eked out by hers.

And now, if she were to say, "No! if you die, I will put no finger to your work"—it seemed as if she would be crushing that bruised heart.

For four hours Dorothea lay in this conflict, till

she felt ill and bewildered, unable to resolve, praying mutely. Helpless as a child which has sobbed and sought too long, she fell into a late morning sleep, and when she waked Mr Casaubon was already up. Tantripp told her that he had read prayers, breakfasted, and was in the library.

"I never saw you look so pale, madam," said Tantripp, a solid-figured woman who had been with the sisters at Lausanne.

"Was I ever high-coloured, Tantripp?" said Dorothea, smiling faintly.

"Well, not to say high-coloured, but with a bloom like a Chiny rose. But always smelling those leather books, what can be expected? Do rest a little this morning, madam. Let me say you are ill and not able to go into that close library."

"Oh no, no! let me make haste," said Dorothea. "Mr Casaubon wants me particularly."

When she went down she felt sure that she should promise to fulfil his wishes; but that would be later in the day—not yet.

As Dorothea entered the library, Mr Casaubon turned round from the table where he had been placing some books, and said—

"I was waiting for your appearance, my dear. I had hoped to set to work at once this morning,

but I find myself under some indisposition, probably from too much excitement yesterday. I am going now to take a turn in the shrubbery, since the air is milder."

"I am glad to hear that," said Dorothea. "Your mind, I feared, was too active last night."

"I would fain have it set at rest on the point I last spoke of, Dorothea. You can now, I hope, give me an answer."

"May I come out to you in the garden presently?" said Dorothea, winning a little breathing-space in that way.

"I shall be in the Yew-Tree Walk for the next half-hour," said Mr Casaubon, and then he left her.

Dorothea, feeling very weary, rang and asked Tantripp to bring her some wraps. She had been sitting still for a few minutes, but not in any renewal of the former conflict: she simply felt that she was going to say "Yes" to her own doom: she was too weak, too full of dread at the thought of inflicting a keen-edged blow on her husband, to do anything but submit completely. She sat still and let Tantripp put on her bonnet and shawl, a passivity which was unusual with her, for she liked to wait on herself.

"God bless you, madam!" said Tantripp, with

an irrepressible movement of love towards the beautiful, gentle creature for whom she felt unable to do anything more, now that she had finished tying the bonnet.

This was too much for Dorothea's highly-strung feeling, and she burst into tears, sobbing against Tantripp's arm. But soon she checked herself, dried her eyes, and went out at the glass door into the shrubbery.

"I wish every book in that library was built into a caticom for your master," said Tantripp to Pratt, the butler, finding him in the breakfast-room. She had been at Rome, and visited the antiquities, as we know; and she always declined to call Mr Casaubon anything but "your master," when speaking to the other servants.

Pratt laughed. He liked his master very well, but he liked Tantripp better.

When Dorothea was out on the gravel walks, she lingered among the nearer clumps of trees, hesitating, as she had done once before, though from a different cause. Then she had feared lest her effort at fellowship should be unwelcome; now she dreaded going to the spot where she foresaw that she must bind herself to a fellowship from which she shrank. Neither law nor the world's opinion compelled her to this—only her husband's

nature and her own compassion, only the ideal, and not the real yoke of marriage. She saw clearly enough the whole situation, yet she was fettered: she could not smite the stricken soul that entreated hers. If that were weakness, Dorothea was weak. But the half-hour was passing, and she must not delay longer. When she entered the Yew-Tree Walk she could not see her husband; but the walk had bends, and she went, expecting to catch sight of his figure wrapped in a blue cloak, which, with a warm velvet cap, was his outer garment on chill days for the garden. It occurred to her that he might be resting in the summer-house, towards which the path diverged a little. Turning the angle, she could see him seated on the bench, close to a stone table. His arms were resting on the table, and his brow was bowed down on them, the blue cloak being dragged forward and screening his face on each side.

"He exhausted himself last night," Dorothea said to herself, thinking at first that he was asleep, and that the summer-house was too damp a place to rest in. But then she remembered that of late she had seen him take that attitude when she was reading to him, as if he found it easier than any other; and that he would sometimes speak, as well as listen, with his face down in that way.

She went into the summer-house and said, "I am come, Edward; I am ready."

He took no notice, and she thought that he must be fast asleep. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and repeated, "I am ready!" Still he was motionless; and with a sudden confused fear, she leaned down to him, took off his velvet cap, and leaned her cheek close to his head, crying in a distressed tone,

"Wake, dear, wake! Listen to me. I am come to answer."

But Dorothea never gave her answer.

Later in the day, Lydgate was seated by her bedside, and she was talking deliriously, thinking aloud, and recalling what had gone through her mind the night before. She knew him, and called him by his name, but appeared to think it right that she should explain everything to him; and again, and again, begged him to explain everything to her husband.

"Tell him I shall go to him soon: I am ready to promise. Only, thinking about it was so dreadful—it has made me ill. Not very ill. I shall soon be better. Go and tell him."

But the silence in her husband's ear was never more to be broken.

# CHAPTER XLIX.

A task too strong for wizard spells
This squire had brought about;
'Tis easy dropping stones in wells,
But who shall get them out?

"I WISH to God we could hinder Dorothea from knowing this," said Sir James Chettam, with the little frown on his brow, and an expression of intense disgust about his mouth.

He was standing on the hearth-rug in the library at Lowick Grange, and speaking to Mr Brooke. It was the day after Mr Casaubon had been buried, and Dorothea was not yet able to leave her room.

"That would be difficult, you know, Chettam, as she is an executrix, and she likes to go into these things—property, land, that kind of thing. She has her notions, you know," said Mr Brooke, sticking his eye-glasses on nervously, and exploring the edges of a folded paper which he held in

his hand; "and she would like to act—depend upon it, as an executrix Dorothea would want to act. And she was twenty-one last December, you know. I can hinder nothing."

Sir James looked at the carpet for a minute in silence, and then lifting his eyes suddenly fixed them on Mr Brooke, saying, "I will tell you what we can do. Until Dorothea is well, all business must be kept from her, and as soon as she is able to be moved she must come to us. Being with Celia and the baby will be the best thing in the world for her, and will pass away the time. And meanwhile you must get rid of Ladislaw: you must send him out of the country." Here Sir James's look of disgust returned in all its intensity.

Mr Brooke put his hands behind him, walked to the window and straightened his back with a little shake before he replied.

"That is easily said, Chettam, easily said, you know."

"My dear sir," persisted Sir James, restraining his indignation within respectful forms, "it was you who brought him here, and you who keep him here—I mean by the occupation you give him."

"Yes, but I can't dismiss him in an instant without assigning reasons, my dear Chettam.

Ladislaw has been invaluable, most satisfactory. I consider that I have done this part of the country a service by bringing him—by bringing him, you know." Mr Brooke ended with a nod, turning round to give it.

"It's a pity this part of the country didn't do without him, that's all I have to say about it. At any rate, as Dorothea's brother-in-law, I feel warranted in objecting strongly to his being kept here by any action on the part of her friends. You admit, I hope, that I have a right to speak about what concerns the dignity of my wife's sister?"

Sir James was getting warm.

"Of course, my dear Chettam, of course. But you and I have different ideas—different——"

"Not about this action of Casaubon's, I should hope," interrupted Sir James. "I say that he has most unfairly compromised Dorothea. I say that there never was a meaner, more ungentlemanly action than this—a codicil of this sort to a will which he made at the time of his marriage with the knowledge and reliance of her family—a positive insult to Dorothea!"

"Well, you know, Casaubon was a little twisted about Ladislaw. Ladislaw has told me the reason—dislike of the bent he took, you know—Ladislaw

didn't think much of Casaubon's notions, Thoth and Dagon—that sort of thing: and I fancy that Casaubon didn't like the independent position Ladislaw had taken up. I saw the letters between them, you know. Poor Casaubon was a little buried in books—he didn't know the world."

"It's all very well for Ladislaw to put that colour on it," said Sir James. "But I believe Casaubon was only jealous of him on Dorothea's account, and the world will suppose that she gave him some reason; and that is what makes it so abominable—coupling her name with this young fellow's."

"My dear Chettam, it won't lead to anything, you know," said Mr Brooke, seating himself and sticking on his eye-glass again. "It's all of a piece with Casaubon's oddity. This paper, now, 'Synoptical Tabulation' and so on, 'for the use of Mrs Casaubon,' it was locked up in the desk with the will. I suppose he meant Dorothea to publish his researches, eh! and she'll do it, you know; she has gone into his studies uncommonly."

"My dear sir," said Sir James, impatiently, "that is neither here nor there. The question is, whether you don't see with me the propriety of sending young Ladislaw away?"

"Well, no, not the urgency of the thing. By-

and-by, perhaps, it may come round. As to gossip, you know, sending him away won't hinder gossip. People say what they like to say, not what they have chapter and verse for," said Mr Brooke, becoming acute about the truths that lay on the side of his own wishes. "I might get rid of Ladislaw up to a certain point—take away the 'Pioneer' from him, and that sort of thing; but I couldn't send him out of the country if he didn't choose to go—didn't choose, you know."

Mr Brooke, persisting as quietly as if he were only discussing the nature of last year's weather, and nodding at the end with his usual amenity, was an exasperating form of obstinacy.

"Good God!" said Sir James, with as much passion as he ever showed, "let us get him a post; let us spend money on him. If he could go in the suite of some Colonial Governor! Grampus might take him—and I could write to Fulke about it."

"But Ladislaw won't be shipped off like a head of cattle, my dear fellow; Ladislaw has his ideas. It's my opinion that if he were to part from me to-morrow, you'd only hear the more of him in the country. With his talent for speaking and drawing up documents, there are few men

who could come up to him as an agitator—an agitator, you know."

"Agitator!" said Sir James, with bitter emphasis, feeling that the syllables of this word properly repeated were a sufficient exposure of its hatefulness.

"But be reasonable, Chettam. Dorothea, now. As you say, she had better go to Celia as soon as possible. She can stay under your roof, and in the mean time things may come round quietly. Don't let us be firing off our guns in a hurry, you know. Standish will keep our counsel, and the news will be old before it's known. Twenty things may happen to carry off Ladislaw—without my doing anything, you know."

"Then I am to conclude that you decline to do anything?"

"Decline, Chettam?—no—I didn't say decline. But I really don't see what I could do. Ladislaw is a gentleman."

"I am glad to hear it!" said Sir James, his irritation making him forget himself a little. "I am sure Casaubon was not."

"Well, it would have been worse if he had made the codicil to hinder her from marrying again at all, you know."

"I don't know that," said Sir James. "It would have been less indelicate."

"One of poor Casaubon's freaks! That attack upset his brain a little. It all goes for nothing. She doesn't *want* to marry Ladislaw."

"But this codicil is framed so as to make everybody believe that she did. I don't believe anything of the sort about Dorothea," said Sir James—then frowningly, "but I suspect Ladislaw. I tell you frankly, I suspect Ladislaw."

"I couldn't take any immediate action on that ground, Chettam. In fact, if it were possible to pack him off—send him to Norfolk Island—that sort of thing—it would look all the worse for Dorothea to those who knew about it. It would seem as if we distrusted her—distrusted her, you know."

That Mr Brooke had hit on an undeniable argument, did not tend to soothe Sir James. He put out his hand to reach his hat, implying that he did not mean to contend further, and said, still with some heat—

"Well, I can only say that I think Dorothea was sacrificed once, because her friends were too careless. I shall do what I can, as her brother, to protect her now."

"You can't do better than get her to Freshitt as

soon as possible, Chettam. I approve that plan altogether," said Mr Brooke, well pleased that he had won the argument. It would have been highly inconvenient to him to part with Ladislaw at that time, when a dissolution might happen any day, and electors were to be convinced of the course by which the interests of the country would be best served. Mr Brooke sincerely believed that this end could be secured by his own return to Parliament: he offered the forces of his mind honestly to the nation.

## CHAPTER L.

"'This Loller here wol prechen us somewhat.'
'Nay by my father's soule! that schal he nat,'
Sayde the Schipman, 'here schal he not preche,
He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche.
We leven all in the gret God,' quod he.
He wolden sowen some diffcultee."

—*Canterbury Tales.*

DOROTHEA had been safe at Freshitt Hall nearly a week before she had asked any dangerous questions. Every morning now she sat with Celia in the prettiest of up-stairs sitting-rooms, opening into a small conservatory—Celia all in white and lavender like a bunch of mixed violets, watching the remarkable acts of the baby, which were so dubious to her inexperienced mind that all conversation was interrupted by appeals for their interpretation made to the oracular nurse. Dorothea sat by in her widow's dress, with an expression which rather provoked Celia, as being much too sad; for not only was baby quite well, but really when a husband had been so dull and troublesome while

he lived, and besides that had—well, well! Sir James, of course, had told Celia everything, with a strong representation how important it was that Dorothea should not know it sooner than was inevitable.

But Mr Brooke had been right in predicting that Dorothea would not long remain passive where action had been assigned to her; she knew the purport of her husband's will made at the time of their marriage, and her mind, as soon as she was clearly conscious of her position, was silently occupied with what she ought to do as the owner of Lowick Manor with the patronage of the living attached to it.

One morning when her uncle paid his usual visit, though with an unusual alacrity in his manner which he accounted for by saying that it was now pretty certain Parliament would be dissolved forthwith, Dorothea said—

"Uncle, it is right now that I should consider who is to have the living at Lowick. After Mr Tucker had been provided for, I never heard my husband say that he had any clergyman in his mind as a successor to himself. I think I ought to have the keys now and go to Lowick to examine all my husband's papers. There may be something that would throw light on his wishes."

"No hurry, my dear," said Mr Brooke, quietly. "By-and-by, you know, you can go, if you like. But I cast my eyes over things in the desks and drawers—there was nothing—nothing but deep subjects, you know—besides the will. Everything can be done by-and-by. As to the living, I have had an application for interest already—I should say rather good. Mr Tyke has been strongly recommended to me—I had something to do with getting him an appointment before. An apostolic man, I believe—the sort of thing that would suit you, my dear."

"I should like to have fuller knowledge about him, uncle, and judge for myself, if Mr Casaubon has not left any expression of his wishes. He has perhaps made some addition to his will—there may be some instructions for me," said Dorothea, who had all the while had this conjecture in her mind with relation to her husband's work.

"Nothing about the rectory, my dear—nothing," said Mr Brooke, rising to go away, and putting out his hand to his nieces; "nor about his researches, you know. Nothing in the will."

Dorothea's lip quivered.

"Come, you must not think of these things yet, my dear. By-and-by, you know."

"I am quite well now, uncle; I wish to exert myself."

"Well, well, we shall see. But I must run away now—I have no end of work now—it's a crisis—a political crisis, you know. And here is Celia and her little man—you are an aunt, you know, now, and I am a sort of grandfather," said Mr Brooke, with placid hurry, anxious to get away and tell Chettam that it would not be his (Mr Brooke's) fault if Dorothea insisted on looking into everything.

Dorothea sank back in her chair when her uncle had left the room, and cast her eyes down meditatively on her crossed hands.

"Look, Dodo! look at him! Did you ever see anything like that?" said Celia, in her comfortable staccato.

"What, Kitty?" said Dorothea, lifting her eyes rather absently.

"What? why, his upper lip; see how he is drawing it down, as if he meant to make a face. Isn't it wonderful? He may have his little thoughts. I wish nurse were here. Do look at him."

A large tear which had been for some time gathering, rolled down Dorothea's cheek as she looked up and tried to smile.

"Don't be sad, Dodo; kiss baby. What are you brooding over so? I am sure you did everything, and a great deal too much. You should be happy now."

"I wonder if Sir James would drive me to Lowick. I want to look over everything—to see if there were any words written for me."

"You are not to go till Mr Lydgate says you may go. And he has not said so yet (here you are, nurse: take baby and walk up and down the gallery). Besides, you have got a wrong notion in your head as usual, Dodo—I can see that: it vexes me."

"Where am I wrong, Kitty?" said Dorothea, quite meekly. She was almost ready now to think Celia wiser than herself, and was really wondering with some fear what her wrong notion was. Celia felt her advantage, and was determined to use it. None of them knew Dodo as well as she did, or knew how to manage her. Since Celia's baby was born, she had had a new sense of her mental solidity and calm wisdom. It seemed clear that where there was a baby, things were right enough, and that error, in general, was a mere lack of that central poising force.

"I can see what you are thinking of as well as can be, Dodo," said Celia. "You are wanting to

find out if there is anything uncomfortable for you to do now, only because Mr Casaubon wished it. As if you had not been uncomfortable enough before. And he doesn't deserve it, and you will find that out. He has behaved very badly. James is as angry with him as can be. And I had better tell you, to prepare you."

"Celia," said Dorothea, entreatingly, "you distress me. Tell me at once what you mean." It glanced through her mind that Mr Casaubon had left the property away from her—which would not be so very distressing.

"Why, he has made a codicil to his will, to say the property was all to go away from you if you married—I mean——"

"That is of no consequence," said Dorothea, breaking in impetuously.

"But if you married Mr Ladislaw, not anybody else," Celia went on with persevering quietude. "Of course that is of no consequence in one way —you never *would* marry Mr Ladislaw; but that only makes it worse of Mr Casaubon."

The blood rushed to Dorothea's face and neck painfully. But Celia was administering what she thought a sobering dose of fact. It was taking up notions that had done Dodo's health so much

harm. So she went on in her neutral tone, as if she had been remarking on baby's robes.

"James says so. He says it is abominable, and not like a gentleman. And there never *was* a better judge than James. It is as if Mr Casaubon wanted to make people believe that you would wish to marry Mr Ladislaw—which is ridiculous. Only James says it was to hinder Mr Ladislaw from wanting to marry you for your money—just as if he ever would think of making you an offer. Mrs Cadwallader said you might as well marry an Italian with white mice! But I must just go and look at baby," Celia added, without the least change of tone, throwing a light shawl over her, and tripping away.

Dorothea by this time had turned cold again, and now threw herself back helplessly in her chair. She might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. Everything was changing its aspect: her husband's conduct, her own duteous feeling towards him, every struggle between them—and yet more, her whole relation to Will Ladislaw. Her world was in a state of convulsive change;

the only thing she could say distinctly to herself was, that she must wait and think anew. One change terrified her as if it had been a sin; it was a violent shock of repulsion from her departed husband, who had had hidden thoughts, perhaps perverting everything she said and did. Then again she was conscious of another change which also made her tremulous; it was a sudden strange yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw. It had never before entered her mind that he could, under any circumstances, be her lover: conceive the effect of the sudden revelation that another had thought of him in that light—that perhaps he himself had been conscious of such a possibility,—and this with the hurrying, crowding vision of unfitting conditions, and questions not soon to be solved.

It seemed a long while—she did not know how long—before she heard Celia saying, "That will do, nurse; he will be quiet on my lap now. You can go to lunch, and let Garratt stay in the next room." "What I think, Dodo," Celia went on, observing nothing more than that Dorothea was leaning back in her chair, and likely to be passive, "is that Mr Casaubon was spiteful. I never did like him, and James never did. I think the corners of his mouth were dreadfully spiteful.

And now he has behaved in this way, I am sure religion does not require you to make yourself uncomfortable about him. If he has been taken away, that is a mercy, and you ought to be grateful. *We* should not grieve, should we, baby?" said Celia confidentially to that unconscious centre and poise of the world, who had the most remarkable fists all complete even to the nails, and hair enough, really, when you took his cap off, to make—you didn't know what:—in short, he was Bouddha in a Western form.

At this crisis Lydgate was announced, and one of the first things he said was, "I fear you are not so well as you were, Mrs Casaubon: have you been agitated? allow me to feel your pulse." Dorothea's hand was of a marble coldness.

"She wants to go to Lowick, to look over papers," said Celia. "She ought not, ought she?"

Lydgate did not speak for a few moments. Then he said, looking at Dorothea, "I hardly know. In my opinion Mrs Casaubon should do what would give her the most repose of mind. That repose will not always come from being forbidden to act."

"Thank you," said Dorothea, exerting herself, "I am sure that is wise. There are so many things which I ought to attend to. Why should I sit

here idle?" Then, with an effort to recall subjects not connected with her agitation, she added, abruptly, "You know every one in Middlemarch, I think, Mr Lydgate. I shall ask you to tell me a great deal. I have serious things to do now. I have a living to give away. You know Mr Tyke and all the——" But Dorothea's effort was too much for her; she broke off and burst into sobs.

Lydgate made her drink a dose of sal volatile.

"Let Mrs Casaubon do as she likes," he said to Sir James, whom he asked to see before quitting the house. "She wants perfect freedom, I think, more than any other prescription."

His attendance on Dorothea while her brain was excited, had enabled him to form some true conclusions concerning the trials of her life. He felt sure that she had been suffering from the strain and conflict of self-repression; and that she was likely now to feel herself only in another sort of pinfold than that from which she had been released.

Lydgate's advice was all the easier for Sir James to follow when he found that Celia had already told Dorothea the unpleasant fact about the will. There was no help for it now—no reason for any further delay in the execution of

necessary business. And the next day Sir James complied at once with her request that he would drive her to Lowick.

"I have no wish to stay there at present," said Dorothea; "I could hardly bear it. I am much happier at Freshitt with Celia. I shall be able to think better about what should be done at Lowick by looking at it from a distance. And I should like to be at the Grange a little while with my uncle, and go about in all the old walks and among the people in the village."

"Not yet, I think. Your uncle is having political company, and you are better out of the way of such doings," said Sir James, who at that moment thought of the Grange chiefly as a haunt of young Ladislaw's. But no word passed between him and Dorothea about the objectionable part of the will; indeed, both of them felt that the mention of it between them would be impossible. Sir James was shy, even with men, about disagreeable subjects; and the one thing that Dorothea would have chosen to say, if she had spoken on the matter at all, was forbidden to her at present because it seemed to be a further exposure of her husband's injustice. Yet she did wish that Sir James could know what had passed between her and her husband about Will Ladislaw's

moral claim on the property: it would then, she thought, be apparent to him as it was to her, that her husband's strange indelicate proviso had been chiefly urged by his bitter resistance to that idea of claim, and not merely by personal feelings more difficult to talk about. Also, it must be admitted, Dorothea wished that this could be known for Will's sake, since her friends seemed to think of him as simply an object of Mr Casaubon's charity. Why should he be compared with an Italian carrying white mice? That word quoted from Mrs Cadwallader seemed like a mocking travesty wrought in the dark by an impish finger.

At Lowick Dorothea searched desk and drawer —searched all her husband's places of deposit for private writing, but found no paper addressed especially to her, except that "Synoptical Tabulation" which was probably only the beginning of many intended directions for her guidance. In carrying out this bequest of labour to Dorothea, as in all else, Mr Casaubon had been slow and hesitating, oppressed in the plan of transmitting his work, as he had been in executing it, by the sense of moving heavily in a dim and clogging medium: distrust of Dorothea's competence to arrange what he had prepared was subdued only by distrust of any other redactor. But he had come

at last to create a trust for himself out of Dorothea's nature: she could do what she resolved to do: and he willingly imagined her toiling under the fetters of a promise to erect a tomb with his name upon it. (Not that Mr Casaubon called the future volumes a tomb; he called them the Key to all Mythologies.) But the months gained on him and left his plans belated: he had only had time to ask for that promise by which he sought to keep his cold grasp on Dorothea's life.

The grasp had slipped away. Bound by a pledge given from the depths of her pity, she would have been capable of undertaking a toil which her judgment whispered was vain for all uses except that consecration of faithfulness which is a supreme use. But now her judgment, instead of being controlled by duteous devotion, was made active by the imbittering discovery that in her past union there had lurked the hidden alienation of secrecy and suspicion. The living, suffering man was no longer before her to awaken her pity: there remained only the retrospect of painful subjection to a husband whose thoughts had been lower than she had believed, whose exorbitant claims for himself had even blinded his scrupulous care for his own character, and made him defeat his own pride by shocking men of

ordinary honour. As for the property which was the sign of that broken tie, she would have been glad to be free from it and have nothing more than her original fortune which had been settled on her, if there had not been duties attached to ownership, which she ought not to flinch from. About this property many troublous questions insisted on rising: had she not been right in thinking that the half of it ought to go to Will Ladislaw?—but was it not impossible now for her to do that act of justice? Mr Casaubon had taken a cruelly effective means of hindering her: even with indignation against him in her heart, any act that seemed a triumphant eluding of his purpose revolted her.

After collecting papers of business which she wished to examine, she locked up again the desks and drawers—all empty of personal words for her—empty of any sign that in her husband's lonely brooding his heart had gone out to her in excuse or explanation; and she went back to Freshitt with the sense that around his last hard demand and his last injurious assertion of his power, the silence was unbroken.

Dorothea tried now to turn her thoughts towards immediate duties, and one of these was of a kind which others were determined to remind

her of. Lydgate's ear had caught eagerly her mention of the living, and as soon as he could, he reopened the subject, seeing here a possibility of making amends for the casting-vote he had once given with an ill-satisfied conscience.

"Instead of telling you anything about Mr Tyke," he said, "I should like to speak of another man—Mr Farebrother, the Vicar of St Botolph's. His living is a poor one, and gives him a stinted provision for himself and his family. His mother, aunt, and sister all live with him, and depend upon him. I believe he has never married because of them. I never heard such good preaching as his—such plain, easy eloquence. He would have done to preach at St Paul's Cross after old Latimer. His talk is just as good about all subjects: original, simple, clear. I think him a remarkable fellow: he ought to have done more than he has done."

"Why has he not done more?" said Dorothea, interested now in all who had slipped below their own intention.

"That's a hard question," said Lydgate. "I find myself that it's uncommonly difficult to make the right thing work: there are so many strings pulling at once. Farebrother often hints that he has got into the wrong profession; he wants a wider range than that of a poor clergyman, and I

suppose he has no interest to help him on. He is very fond of Natural History and various scientific matters, and he is hampered in reconciling these tastes with his position. He has no money to spare—hardly enough to use; and that has led him into card-playing—Middlemarch is a great place for whist. He does play for money, and he wins a good deal. Of course that takes him into company a little beneath him, and makes him slack about some things; and yet, with all that, looking at him as a whole, I think he is one of the most blameless men I ever knew. He has neither venom nor doubleness in him, and those often go with a more correct outside."

"I wonder whether he suffers in his conscience because of that habit," said Dorothea; "I wonder whether he wishes he could leave it off."

"I have no doubt he would leave it off, if he were transplanted into plenty: he would be glad of the time for other things."

"My uncle says that Mr Tyke is spoken of as an apostolic man," said Dorothea, meditatively. She was wishing it were possible to restore the times of primitive zeal, and yet thinking of Mr Farebrother with a strong desire to rescue him from his chance-gotten money.

"I don't pretend to say that Farebrother is

apostolic," said Lydgate. "His position is not quite like that of the Apostles: he is only a parson among parishioners whose lives he has to try and make better. Practically I find that what is called being apostolic now, is an impatience of everything in which the parson doesn't cut the principal figure. I see something of that in Mr Tyke at the Hospital: a good deal of his doctrine is a sort of pinching hard to make people uncomfortably aware of him. Besides, an apostolic man at Lowick!—he ought to think, as St Francis did, that it is needful to preach to the birds."

"True," said Dorothea. "It is hard to imagine what sort of notions our farmers and labourers get from their teaching. I have been looking into a volume of sermons by Mr Tyke: such sermons would be of no use at Lowick—I mean, about imputed righteousness and the prophecies in the Apocalypse. I have always been thinking of the different ways in which Christianity is taught, and whenever I find one way that makes it a wider blessing than any other, I cling to that as the truest—I mean that which takes in the most good of all kinds, and brings in the most people as sharers in it. It is surely better to pardon too much, than to condemn too much. But I should like to see Mr Farebrother and hear him preach."

"Do," said Lydgate; "I trust to the effect of that. He is very much beloved, but he has his enemies too: there are always people who can't forgive an able man for differing from them. And that money-winning business is really a blot. You don't, of course, see many Middlemarch people: but Mr Ladislaw, who is constantly seeing Mr Brooke, is a great friend of Mr Farebrother's old ladies, and would be glad to sing the Vicar's praises. One of the old ladies—Miss Noble, the aunt—is a wonderfully quaint picture of self-forgetful goodness, and Ladislaw gallants her about sometimes. I met them one day in a back street: you know Ladislaw's look—a sort of Daphnis in coat and waistcoat; and this little old maid reaching up to his arm—they looked like a couple dropped out of a romantic comedy. But the best evidence about Farebrother is to see him and hear him."

Happily Dorothea was in her private sitting-room when this conversation occurred, and there was no one present to make Lydgate's innocent introduction of Ladislaw painful to her. As was usual with him in matters of personal gossip, Lydgate had quite forgotten Rosamond's remark that she thought Will adored Mrs Casaubon. At that moment he was only caring for what would

recommend the Farebrother family; and he had purposely given emphasis to the worst that could be said about the Vicar, in order to forestall objections. In the weeks since Mr Casaubon's death he had hardly seen Ladislaw, and he had heard no rumour to warn him that Mr Brooke's confidential secretary was a dangerous subject with Mrs Casaubon. When he was gone, his picture of Ladislaw lingered in her mind and disputed the ground with that question of the Lowick living. What was Will Ladislaw thinking about her? Would he hear of that fact which made her cheeks burn as they never used to do? And how would he feel when he heard it?—But she could see as well as possible how he smiled down at the little old maid. An Italian with white mice!—on the contrary, he was a creature who entered into every one's feelings, and could take the pressure of their thought instead of urging his own with iron resistance.

# CHAPTER LI.

Party is Nature too, and you shall see
By force of Logic how they both agree:
The Many in the One, the One in Many;
All is not Some, nor Some the same as any:
Genus holds species, both are great or small;
One genus highest, one not high at all;
Each species has its differentia too,
This is not That, and He was never You,
Though this and that are AVES, and you and he
Are like as one to one, or three to three.

No gossip about Mr Casaubon's will had yet reached Ladislaw: the air seemed to be filled with the dissolution of Parliament and the coming election, as the old wakes and fairs were filled with the rival clatter of itinerant shows; and more private noises were taken little notice of. The famous "dry election" was at hand, in which the depths of public feeling might be measured by the low flood-mark of drink. Will Ladislaw was one of the busiest at this time; and though Dorothea's widowhood was continually in his thought, he was

so far from wishing to be spoken to on the subject, that when Lydgate sought him out to tell him what had passed about the Lowick living, he answered rather waspishly—

"Why should you bring me into the matter? I never see Mrs Casaubon, and am not likely to see her, since she is at Freshitt. I never go there. It is Tory ground, where I and the 'Pioneer' are no more welcome than a poacher and his gun."

The fact was that Will had been made the more susceptible by observing that Mr Brooke, instead of wishing him, as before, to come to the Grange oftener than was quite agreeable to himself, seemed now to contrive that he should go there as little as possible. This was a shuffling concession of Mr Brooke's to Sir James Chettam's indignant remonstrance; and Will, awake to the slightest hint in this direction, concluded that he was to be kept away from the Grange on Dorothea's account. Her friends, then, regarded him with some suspicion? Their fears were quite superfluous: they were very much mistaken if they imagined that he would put himself forward as a needy adventurer trying to win the favour of a rich woman.

Until now Will had never fully seen the chasm between himself and Dorothea—until now that he was come to the brink of it, and saw her on the

other side. He began, not without some inward rage, to think of going away from the neighbourhood: it would be impossible for him to show any further interest in Dorothea without subjecting himself to disagreeable imputations—perhaps even in her mind, which others might try to poison.

"We are for ever divided," said Will. "I might as well be at Rome; she would be no farther from me." But what we call our despair is often only the painful eagerness of unfed hope. There were plenty of reasons why he should not go—public reasons why he should not quit his post at this crisis, leaving Mr Brooke in the lurch when he needed "coaching" for the election, and when there was so much canvassing, direct and indirect, to be carried on. Will could not like to leave his own chessmen in the heat of a game; and any candidate on the right side, even if his brain and marrow had been as soft as was consistent with a gentlemanly bearing, might help to turn a majority. To coach Mr Brooke and keep him steadily to the idea that he must pledge himself to vote for the actual Reform Bill, instead of insisting on his independence and power of pulling up in time, was not an easy task. Mr Farebrother's prophecy of a fourth candidate "in the bag" had not yet been fulfilled, neither the Parliamentary Candidate Society

nor any other power on the watch to secure a reforming majority seeing a worthy nodus for interference while there was a second reforming candidate like Mr Brooke, who might be returned at his own expense; and the fight lay entirely between Pinkerton the old Tory member, Bagster the new Whig member returned at the last election, and Brooke the future independent member, who was to fetter himself for this occasion only. Mr Hawley and his party would bend all their forces to the return of Pinkerton, and Mr Brooke's success must depend either on plumpers which would leave Bagster in the rear, or on the new minting of Tory votes into reforming votes. The latter means, of course, would be preferable.

This prospect of converting votes was a dangerous distraction to Mr Brooke: his impression that waverers were likely to be allured by wavering statements, and also the liability of his mind to stick afresh at opposing arguments as they turned up in his memory, gave Will Ladislaw much trouble.

"You know there are tactics in these things," said Mr Brooke; "meeting people half-way—tempering your ideas—saying, 'Well now, there's something in that,' and so on. I agree with you that this is a peculiar occasion—the country with

a will of its own—political unions—that sort of thing—but we sometimes cut with rather too sharp a knife, Ladislaw. These ten-pound householders, now: why ten? Draw the line somewhere —yes: but why just at ten? That's a difficult question, now, if you go into it."

"Of course it is," said Will, impatiently. "But if you are to wait till we get a logical Bill, you must put yourself forward as a revolutionist, and then Middlemarch would not elect you, I fancy. As for trimming, this is not a time for trimming."

Mr Brooke always ended by agreeing with Ladislaw, who still appeared to him a sort of Burke with a leaven of Shelley; but after an interval the wisdom of his own methods reasserted itself, and he was again drawn into using them with much hopefulness. At this stage of affairs he was in excellent spirits, which even supported him under large advances of money; for his powers of convincing and persuading had not yet been tested by anything more difficult than a chairman's speech introducing other orators, or a dialogue with a Middlemarch voter, from which he came away with a sense that he was a tactician by nature, and that it was a pity he had not gone earlier into this kind of thing. He was a little conscious of defeat, however, with Mr Mawmsey, a

chief representative in Middlemarch of that great social power, the retail trader, and naturally one of the most doubtful voters in the town—willing for his own part to supply an equal quality of teas and sugars to reformer and anti-reformer, as well as to agree impartially with both, and feeling like the burgesses of old that this necessity of electing members was a great burthen to a town; for even if there were no danger in holding out hopes to all parties beforehand, there would be the painful necessity at last of disappointing respectable people whose names were on his books. He was accustomed to receive large orders from Mr Brooke of Tipton; but then, there were many of Pinkerton's committee whose opinions had a great weight of grocery on their side. Mr Mawmsey thinking that Mr Brooke, as not too "clever in his intellects," was the more likely to forgive a grocer who gave a hostile vote under pressure, had become confidential in his back parlour.

"As to Reform, sir, put it in a family light," he said, rattling the small silver in his pocket, and smiling affably. "Will it support Mrs Mawmsey, and enable her to bring up six children when I am no more? I put the question *fictiously*, knowing what must be the answer. Very well, sir. I ask you what, as a husband and a father, I am to do

when gentlemen come to me and say, 'Do as you like, Mawmsey; but if you vote against us, I shall get my groceries elsewhere: when I sugar my liquor I like to feel that I am benefiting the country by maintaining tradesmen of the right colour.' Those very words have been spoken to me, sir, in the very chair where you are now sitting. I don't mean by your honourable self, Mr Brooke."

"No, no, no—that's narrow, you know. Until my butler complains to me of your goods, Mr Mawmsey," said Mr Brooke, soothingly, "until I hear that you send bad sugars, spices—that sort of thing—I shall never order him to go elsewhere."

"Sir, I am your humble servant, and greatly obliged," said Mr Mawmsey, feeling that politics were clearing up a little. "There would be some pleasure in voting for a gentleman who speaks in that honourable manner."

"Well, you know, Mr Mawmsey, you would find it the right thing to put yourself on our side. This Reform will touch everybody by-and-by—a thoroughly popular measure—a sort of A, B, C, you know, that must come first before the rest can follow. I quite agree with you that you've got to look at the thing in a family light: but public spirit, now. We're all one family, you know—it's all one cupboard. Such a thing as a vote, now:

why, it may help to make men's fortunes at the Cape—there's no knowing what may be the effect of a vote," Mr Brooke ended, with a sense of being a little out at sea, though finding it still enjoyable. But Mr Mawmsey answered in a tone of decisive check.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I can't afford that. When I give a vote I must know what I'm doing; I must look to what will be the effects on my till and ledger, speaking respectfully. Prices, I'll admit, are what nobody can know the merits of; and the sudden falls after you've bought in currants, which are a goods that will not keep—I've never myself seen into the ins and outs there; which is a rebuke to human pride. But as to one family, there's debtor and creditor, I hope; they're not going to reform that away; else I should vote for things staying as they are. Few men have less need to cry for change than I have, personally speaking—that is, for self and family. I am not one of those who have nothing to lose: I mean as to respectability both in parish and private business, and noways in respect of your honourable self and custom, which you was good enough to say you would not withdraw from me, vote or no vote, while the article sent in was satisfactory."

After this conversation Mr Mawmsey went up

and boasted to his wife that he had been rather too many for Brooke of Tipton, and that he didn't mind so much now about going to the poll.

Mr Brooke on this occasion abstained from boasting of his tactics to Ladislaw, who for his part was glad enough to persuade himself that he had no concern with any canvassing except the purely argumentative sort, and that he worked no meaner engine than knowledge. Mr Brooke, necessarily, had his agents, who understood the nature of the Middlemarch voter and the means of enlisting his ignorance on the side of the Bill—which were remarkably similar to the means of enlisting it on the side against the Bill. Will stopped his ears. Occasionally Parliament, like the rest of our lives, even to our eating and apparel, could hardly go on if our imaginations were too active about processes. There were plenty of dirty-handed men in the world to do dirty business; and Will protested to himself that his share in bringing Mr Brooke through would be quite innocent.

But whether he should succeed in that mode of contributing to the majority on the right side was very doubtful to him. He had written out various speeches and memoranda for speeches, but he had begun to perceive that Mr Brooke's mind, if it had

the burthen of remembering any train of thought, would let it drop, run away in search of it, and not easily come back again. To collect documents is one mode of serving your country, and to remember the contents of a document is another. No! the only way in which Mr Brooke could be coerced into thinking of the right arguments at the right time was to be well plied with them till they took up all the room in his brain. But here there was the difficulty of finding room, so many things having been taken in beforehand. Mr Brooke himself observed that his ideas stood rather in his way when he was speaking.

However, Ladislaw's coaching was forthwith to be put to the test, for before the day of nomination Mr Brooke was to explain himself to the worthy electors of Middlemarch from the balcony of the White Hart, which looked out advantageously at an angle of the market-place, commanding a large area in front and two converging streets. It was a fine May morning, and everything seemed hopeful: there was some prospect of an understanding between Bagster's committee and Brooke's, to which Mr Bulstrode, Mr Standish as a Liberal lawyer, and such manufacturers as Mr Plymdale and Mr Vincy, gave a solidity which almost counterbalanced Mr Hawley and his associates who sat

for Pinkerton at the Green Dragon. Mr Brooke, conscious of having weakened the blasts of the 'Trumpet' against him, by his reforms as a landlord in the last half-year, and hearing himself cheered a little as he drove into the town, felt his heart tolerably light under his buff-coloured waistcoat. But with regard to critical occasions, it often happens that all moments seem comfortably remote until the last.

"This looks well, eh?" said Mr Brooke as the crowd gathered. "I shall have a good audience, at any rate. I like this, now—this kind of public made up of one's own neighbours, you know!"

The weavers and tanners of Middlemarch, unlike Mr Mawmsey, had never thought of Mr Brooke as a neighbour, and were not more attached to him than if he had been sent in a box from London. But they listened without much disturbance to the speakers who introduced the candidate, though one of them—a political personage from Brassing, who came to tell Middlemarch its duty—spoke so fully, that it was alarming to think what the candidate could find to say after him. Meanwhile the crowd became denser, and as the political personage neared the end of his speech, Mr Brooke felt a remarkable change in his sensations while he still handled his eye-glass, trifled

with documents before him, and exchanged remarks with his committee, as a man to whom the moment of summons was indifferent.

"I'll take another glass of sherry, Ladislaw," he said, with an easy air, to Will, who was close behind him, and presently handed him the supposed fortifier. It was ill-chosen; for Mr Brooke was an abstemious man, and to drink a second glass of sherry quickly at no great interval from the first was a surprise to his system which tended to scatter his energies instead of collecting them. Pray pity him: so many English gentlemen make themselves miserable by speechifying on entirely private grounds! whereas Mr Brooke wished to serve his country by standing for Parliament—which, indeed, may also be done on private grounds, but being once undertaken does absolutely demand some speechifying.

It was not about the beginning of his speech that Mr Brooke was at all anxious: this, he felt sure, would be all right; he should have it quite pat, cut out as neatly as a set of couplets from Pope. Embarking would be easy, but the vision of open sea that might come after was alarming. "And questions, now," hinted the demon just waking up in his stomach, "somebody may put questions about the schedules.—Ladislaw," he continued,

aloud, "just hand me the memorandum of the schedules."

When Mr Brooke presented himself on the balcony, the cheers were quite loud enough to counterbalance the yells, groans, brayings, and other expressions of adverse theory, which were so moderate that Mr Standish (decidedly an old bird) observed in the ear next to him, "This looks dangerous, by God! Hawley has got some deeper plan than this." Still, the cheers were exhilarating, and no candidate could look more amiable than Mr Brooke, with the memorandum in his breast-pocket, his left hand on the rail of the balcony, and his right trifling with his eye-glass. The striking points in his appearance were his buff waistcoat, short-clipped blond hair, and neutral physiognomy. He began with some confidence.

"Gentlemen—Electors of Middlemarch!"

This was so much the right thing that a little pause after it seemed natural.

"I'm uncommonly glad to be here—I was never so proud and happy in my life—never so happy, you know."

This was a bold figure of speech, but not exactly the right thing; for, unhappily, the pat opening had slipped away—even couplets from Pope may

be but "fallings from us, vanishings," when fear clutches us, and a glass of sherry is hurrying like smoke among our ideas. Ladislaw, who stood at the window behind the speaker, thought, "It's all up now. The only chance is that, since the best thing won't always do, floundering may answer for once." Mr Brooke, meanwhile, having lost other clues, fell back on himself and his qualifications—always an appropriate graceful subject for a candidate.

"I am a close neighbour of yours, my good friends—you've known me on the bench a good while—I've always gone a good deal into public questions—machinery, now, and machine-breaking—you're many of you concerned with machinery, and I've been going into that lately. It won't do, you know, breaking machines: everything must go on—trade, manufactures, commerce, interchange of staples—that kind of thing—since Adam Smith, that must go on. We must look all over the globe:—'Observation with extensive view,' must look everywhere, 'from China to Peru,' as somebody says—Johnson, I think, 'The Rambler,' you know. That is what I have done up to a certain point—not as far as Peru; but I've not always stayed at home—I saw it wouldn't do. I've been in the Levant, where some of your Mid-

dlemarch goods go—and then, again, in the Baltic. The Baltic, now."

Plying among his recollections in this way, Mr Brooke might have got along easily to himself, and would have come back from the remotest seas without trouble ; but a diabolical procedure had been set up by the enemy. At one and the same moment there had risen above the shoulders of the crowd, nearly opposite Mr Brooke, and within ten yards of him, the effigy of himself; buff-coloured waistcoat, eye-glass, and neutral physiognomy, painted on rag ; and there had arisen, apparently in the air, like the note of the cuckoo, a parrot-like, Punch-voiced echo of his words. Everybody looked up at the open windows in the houses at the opposite angles of the converging streets ; but they were either blank, or filled by laughing listeners. The most innocent echo has an impish mockery in it when it follows a gravely persistent speaker, and this echo was not at all innocent ; if it did not follow with the precision of a natural echo, it had a wicked choice of the words it overtook. By the time it said, "The Baltic, now," the laugh which had been running through the audience became a general shout, and but for the sobering effects of party and that great public cause which the entanglement of

things had identified with "Brooke of Tipton," the laugh might have caught his committee. Mr Bulstrode asked, reprehensively, what the new police was doing; but a voice could not well be collared, and an attack on the effigy of the candidate would have been too equivocal, since Hawley probably meant it to be pelted.

Mr Brooke himself was not in a position to be quickly conscious of anything except a general slipping away of ideas within himself: he had even a little singing in the ears, and he was the only person who had not yet taken distinct account of the echo or discerned the image of himself. Few things hold the perceptions more thoroughly captive than anxiety about what we have got to say. Mr Brooke heard the laughter; but he had expected some Tory efforts at disturbance, and he was at this moment additionally excited by the tickling, stinging sense that his lost exordium was coming back to fetch him from the Baltic.

"That reminds me," he went on, thrusting a hand into his side-pocket with an easy air, "if I wanted a precedent, you know—but we never want a precedent for the right thing—but there is Chatham, now: I can't say I should have supported Chatham, or Pitt, the younger Pitt—he was

not a man of ideas, and we want ideas, you know."

"Blast your ideas! we want the Bill," said a loud rough voice from the crowd below.

Immediately the invisible Punch, who had hitherto followed Mr Brooke, repeated, "Blast your ideas! we want the Bill." The laugh was louder than ever, and for the first time Mr Brooke being himself silent, heard distinctly the mocking echo. But it seemed to ridicule his interrupter, and in that light was encouraging; so he replied with amenity—

"There is something in what you say, my good friend, and what do we meet for but to speak our minds—freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, liberty—that kind of thing? The Bill, now—you shall have the Bill"—here Mr Brooke paused a moment to fix on his eye-glass and take the paper from his breast-pocket, with a sense of being practical and coming to particulars. The invisible Punch followed:—

"You shall have the Bill, Mr Brooke, per electioneering contest, and a seat outside Parliament as delivered, five thousand pounds, seven shillings, and fourpence."

Mr Brooke, amid the roars of laughter, turned red, let his eye-glass fall, and looking about him

confusedly, saw the image of himself, which had come nearer. The next moment he saw it dolorously bespattered with eggs. His spirit rose a little, and his voice too.

"Buffoonery, tricks, ridicule the test of truth—all that is very well"— here an unpleasant egg broke on Mr Brooke's shoulder, as the echo said, "All that is very well;" then came a hail of eggs, chiefly aimed at the image, but occasionally hitting the original, as if by chance. There was a stream of new men pushing among the crowd; whistles, yells, bellowings, and fifes made all the greater hubbub because there was shouting and struggling to put them down. No voice would have had wing enough to rise above the uproar, and Mr Brooke, disagreeably anointed, stood his ground no longer. The frustration would have been less exasperating if it had been less gamesome and boyish: a serious assault of which the newspaper reporter "can aver that it endangered the learned gentleman's ribs," or can respectfully bear witness to "the soles of that gentleman's boots having been visible above the railing," has perhaps more consolations attached to it.

Mr Brooke re-entered the committee-room, saying, as carelessly as he could, "This is a little too bad, you know. I should have got the ear of the

people by-and-by—but they didn't give me time. I should have gone into the Bill by-and-by, you know," he added, glancing at Ladislaw. "However, things will come all right at the nomination."

But it was not resolved unanimously that things would come right; on the contrary, the committee looked rather grim, and the political personage from Brassing was writing busily, as if he were brewing new devices.

"It was Bowyer who did it," said Mr Standish, evasively. "I know it as well as if he had been advertised. He's uncommonly good at ventriloquism, and he did it uncommonly well, by God! Hawley has been having him to dinner lately: there's a fund of talent in Bowyer."

"Well, you know, you never mentioned him to me, Standish, else I would have invited him to dine," said poor Mr Brooke, who had gone through a great deal of inviting for the good of his country.

"There's not a more paltry fellow in Middlemarch than Bowyer," said Ladislaw, indignantly, "but it seems as if the paltry fellows were always to turn the scale."

Will was thoroughly out of temper with himself as well as with his "principal," and he went to shut himself in his rooms with a half-formed resolve to throw up the 'Pioneer' and Mr Brooke

together. Why should he stay? If the impassable gulf between himself and Dorothea were ever to be filled up, it must rather be by his going away and getting into a thoroughly different position than by his staying here and slipping into deserved contempt as an understrapper of Brooke's. Then came the young dream of wonders that he might do—in five years, for example: political writing, political speaking, would get a higher value now public life was going to be wider and more national, and they might give him such distinction that he would not seem to be asking Dorothea to step down to him. Five years:—if he could only be sure that she cared for him more than for others; if he could only make her aware that he stood aloof until he could tell his love without lowering himself—then he could go away easily, and begin a career which at five-and-twenty seemed probable enough in the inward order of things, where talent brings fame, and fame everything else which is delightful. He could speak and he could write; he could master any subject if he chose, and he meant always to take the side of reason and justice, on which he would carry all his ardour. Why should he not one day be lifted above the shoulders of the crowd, and feel that he had won that eminence well? Without doubt he

would leave Middlemarch, go to town, and make himself fit for celebrity by "eating his dinners."

But not immediately: not until some kind of sign had passed between him and Dorothea. He could not be satisfied until she knew why, even if he were the man she would choose to marry, he would not marry her. Hence he must keep his post and bear with Mr Brooke a little longer.

But he soon had reason to suspect that Mr Brooke had anticipated him in the wish to break up their connection. Deputations without and voices within had concurred in inducing that philanthropist to take a stronger measure than usual for the good of mankind; namely, to withdraw in favour of another candidate, to whom he left the advantages of his canvassing machinery. He himself called this a strong measure, but observed that his health was less capable of sustaining excitement than he had imagined.

"I have felt uneasy about the chest—it won't do to carry that too far," he said to Ladislaw in explaining the affair. "I must pull up. Poor Casaubon was a warning, you know. I've made some heavy advances, but I've dug a channel. It's rather coarse work—this electioneering, eh, Ladislaw? I daresay you are tired of it. However, we have dug a channel with the 'Pioneer'—

put things in a track, and so on. A more ordinary man than you might carry it on now—more ordinary, you know."

"Do you wish me to give it up?" said Will, the quick colour coming in his face, as he rose from the writing-table, and took a turn of three steps with his hands in his pockets. "I am ready to do so whenever you wish it."

"As to wishing, my dear Ladislaw, I have the highest opinion of your powers, you know. But about the 'Pioneer,' I have been consulting a little with some of the men on our side, and they are inclined to take it into their hands—indemnify me to a certain extent—carry it on, in fact. And under the circumstances, you might like to give up—might find a better field. These people might not take that high view of you which I have always taken, as an *alter ego*, a right hand—though I always looked forward to your doing something else. I think of having a run into France. But I'll write you any letters, you know—to Althorpe and people of that kind. I've met Althorpe."

"I am exceedingly obliged to you," said Ladislaw, proudly. "Since you are going to part with the 'Pioneer,' I need not trouble you about

the steps I shall take. I may choose to continue here for the present."

After Mr Brooke had left him Will said to himself, "The rest of the family have been urging him to get rid of me, and he doesn't care now about my going. I shall stay as long as I like. I shall go of my own movement, and not because they are afraid of me."

# CHAPTER LII.

"His heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay."
—WORDSWORTH.

ON that June evening when Mr Farebrother knew that he was to have the Lowick living, there was joy in the old-fashioned parlour, and even the portraits of the great lawyers seemed to look on with satisfaction. His mother left her tea and toast untouched, but sat with her usual pretty primness, only showing her emotion by that flush in the cheeks and brightness in the eyes which give an old woman a touching momentary identity with her far-off youthful self, and saying decisively—

"The greatest comfort, Camden, is that you have deserved it."

"When a man gets a good berth, mother, half the deserving must come after," said the son, brimful of pleasure, and not trying to conceal it. The gladness in his face was of that active kind

which seems to have energy enough not only to flash outwardly, but to light up busy vision within: one seemed to see thoughts as well as delight in his glances.

"Now, aunt," he went on, rubbing his hands and looking at Miss Noble, who was making tender little beaver-like noises, "there shall be sugar-candy always on the table for you to steal and give to the children, and you shall have a great many new stockings to make presents of, and you shall darn your own more than ever!"

Miss Noble nodded at her nephew with a subdued half-frightened laugh, conscious of having already dropped an additional lump of sugar into her basket on the strength of the new preferment.

"As for you, Winny"—the Vicar went on—"I shall make no difficulty about your marrying any Lowick bachelor—Mr Solomon Featherstone, for example, as soon as I find you are in love with him."

Miss Winifred, who had been looking at her brother all the while and crying heartily, which was her way of rejoicing, smiled through her tears and said, "You must set me the example, Cam: *you* must marry now."

"With all my heart. But who is in love with me? I am a seedy old fellow," said the Vicar,

rising, pushing his chair away and looking down at himself. "What do you say, mother?"

"You are a handsome man, Camden: though not so fine a figure of a man as your father," said the old lady.

"I wish you would marry Miss Garth, brother," said Miss Winifred. "She would make us so lively at Lowick."

"Very fine! You talk as if young women were tied up to be chosen, like poultry at market; as if I had only to ask and everybody would have me," said the Vicar, not caring to specify.

"We don't want everybody," said Miss Winifred. "But *you* would like Miss Garth, mother, shouldn't you?"

"My son's choice shall be mine," said Mrs Farebrother, with majestic discretion, "and a wife would be most welcome, Camden. You will want your whist at home when we go to Lowick, and Henrietta Noble never was a whist-player." (Mrs Farebrother always called her tiny old sister by that magnificent name.)

"I shall do without whist now, mother."

"Why so, Camden? In my time whist was thought an undeniable amusement for a good churchman," said Mrs Farebrother, innocent of the meaning that whist had for her son, and

speaking rather sharply, as at some dangerous countenancing of new doctrine.

"I shall be too busy for whist; I shall have two parishes," said the Vicar, preferring not to discuss the virtues of that game.

He had already said to Dorothea, "I don't feel bound to give up St Botolph's. It is protest enough against the pluralism they want to reform if I give somebody else most of the money. The stronger thing is not to give up power, but to use it well."

"I have thought of that," said Dorothea. "So far as self is concerned, I think it would be easier to give up power and money than to keep them. It seems very unfitting that I should have this patronage, yet I felt that I ought not to let it be used by some one else instead of me."

"It is I who am bound to act so that you will not regret your power," said Mr Farebrother.

His was one of the natures in which conscience gets the more active when the yoke of life ceases to gall them. He made no display of humility on the subject, but in his heart he felt rather ashamed that his conduct had shown laches which others who did not get benefices were free from.

"I used often to wish I had been something

else than a clergyman," he said to Lydgate, "but perhaps it will be better to try and make as good a clergyman out of myself as I can. That is the well-beneficed point of view, you perceive, from which difficulties are much simplified," he ended, smiling.

The Vicar did feel then as if his share of duties would be easy. But duty has a trick of behaving unexpectedly—something like a heavy friend whom we have amiably asked to visit us, and who breaks his leg within our gates.

Hardly a week later, duty presented itself in his study under the disguise of Fred Vincy, now returned from Omnibus College with his bachelor's degree.

"I am ashamed to trouble you, Mr Farebrother," said Fred, whose fair open face was propitiating, "but you are the only friend I can consult. I told you everything once before, and you were so good that I can't help coming to you again."

"Sit down, Fred, I'm ready to hear and do anything I can," said the Vicar, who was busy packing some small objects for removal, and went on with his work.

"I wanted to tell you——" Fred hesitated an instant and then went on plungingly, "I might

go into the Church now; and really, look where I may, I can't see anything else to do. I don't like it, but I know it's uncommonly hard on my father to say so, after he has spent a good deal of money in educating me for it." Fred paused again an instant, and then repeated, "and I can't see anything else to do."

"I did talk to your father about it, Fred, but I made little way with him. He said it was too late. But you have got over one bridge now: what are your other difficulties?"

"Merely that I don't like it. I don't like divinity, and preaching, and feeling obliged to look serious. I like riding across country, and doing as other men do. I don't mean that I want to be a bad fellow in any way; but I've no taste for the sort of thing people expect of a clergyman. And yet what else am I to do? My father can't spare me any capital, else I might go into farming. And he has no room for me in his trade. And of course I can't begin to study for law or physic now, when my father wants me to earn something. It's all very well to say I'm wrong to go into the Church; but those who say so might as well tell me to go into the backwoods."

Fred's voice had taken a tone of grumbling remonstrance, and Mr Farebrother might have

been inclined to smile if his mind had not been too busy in imagining more than Fred told him.

"Have you any difficulties about doctrines—about the Articles?" he said, trying hard to think of the question simply for Fred's sake.

"No; I suppose the Articles are right. I am not prepared with any arguments to disprove them, and much better, cleverer fellows than I am go in for them entirely. I think it would be rather ridiculous in me to urge scruples of that sort, as if I were a judge," said Fred, quite simply.

"I suppose, then, it has occurred to you that you might be a fair parish priest without being much of a divine?"

"Of course, if I am obliged to be a clergyman, I shall try and do my duty, though I mayn't like it. Do you think anybody ought to blame me?"

"For going into the Church under the circumstances? That depends on your conscience, Fred—how far you have counted the cost, and seen what your position will require of you. I can only tell you about myself, that I have always been too lax, and have been uneasy in consequence."

"But there is another hindrance," said Fred, colouring. "I did not tell you before, though

perhaps I may have said things that made you guess it. There is somebody I am very fond of: I have loved her ever since we were children."

"Miss Garth, I suppose?" said the Vicar, examining some labels very closely.

"Yes. I shouldn't mind anything if she would have me. And I know I could be a good fellow then."

"And you think she returns the feeling?"

"She never will say so; and a good while ago she made me promise not to speak to her about it again. And she has set her mind especially against my being a clergyman; I know that. But I can't give her up. I do think she cares about me. I saw Mrs Garth last night, and she said that Mary was staying at Lowick Rectory with Miss Farebrother."

"Yes, she is very kindly helping my sister. Do you wish to go there?"

"No, I want to ask a great favour of you. I am ashamed to bother you in this way; but Mary might listen to what you said, if you mentioned the subject to her—I mean about my going into the Church."

"That is rather a delicate task, my dear Fred. I shall have to presuppose your attachment to her; and to enter on the subject as you wish me

to do, will be asking her to tell me whether she returns it."

"That is what I want her to tell you," said Fred, bluntly. "I don't know what to do, unless I can get at her feeling."

"You mean that you would be guided by that as to your going into the Church?"

"If Mary said she would never have me I might as well go wrong in one way as another."

"That is nonsense, Fred. Men outlive their love, but they don't outlive the consequences of their recklessness."

"Not my sort of love: I have never been without loving Mary. If I had to give her up, it would be like beginning to live on wooden legs."

"Will she not be hurt at my intrusion?"

"No, I feel sure she will not. She respects you more than any one, and she would not put you off with fun as she does me. Of course I could not have told any one else, or asked any one else to speak to her, but you. There is no one else who could be such a friend to both of us." Fred paused a moment, and then said, rather complainingly, "And she ought to acknowledge that I have worked in order to pass. She ought to believe that I would exert myself for her sake."

There was a moment's silence before Mr Farebrother laid down his work, and putting out his hand to Fred said—

"Very well, my boy. I will do what you wish."

That very day Mr Farebrother went to Lowick parsonage on the nag which he had just set up. "Decidedly I am an old stalk," he thought, "the young growths are pushing me aside."

He found Mary in the garden gathering roses and sprinkling the petals on a sheet. The sun was low, and tall trees sent their shadows across the grassy walks where Mary was moving without bonnet or parasol. She did not observe Mr Farebrother's approach along the grass, and had just stooped down to lecture a small black-and-tan terrier, which would persist in walking on the sheet and smelling at the rose-leaves as Mary sprinkled them. She took his fore-paws in one hand, and lifted up the forefinger of the other, while the dog wrinkled his brows and looked embarrassed. "Fly, Fly, I am ashamed of you," Mary was saying in a grave contralto. "This is not becoming in a sensible dog; anybody would think you were a silly young gentleman."

"You are unmerciful to young gentlemen, Miss Garth," said the Vicar, within two yards of her.

Mary started up and blushed. "It always answers to reason with Fly," she said, laughingly.

"But not with young gentlemen?"

"Oh, with some, I suppose; since some of them turn into excellent men."

"I am glad of that admission, because I want at this very moment to interest you in a young gentleman."

"Not a silly one, I hope," said Mary, beginning to pluck the roses again, and feeling her heart beat uncomfortably.

"No; though perhaps wisdom is not his strong point, but rather affection and sincerity. However, wisdom lies more in those two qualities than people are apt to imagine. I hope you know by those marks what young gentleman I mean."

"Yes, I think I do," said Mary, bravely, her face getting more serious, and her hands cold; "it must be Fred Vincy."

"He has asked me to consult you about his going into the Church. I hope you will not think that I consented to take a liberty in promising to do so."

"On the contrary, Mr Farebrother," said Mary, giving up the roses, and folding her arms, but unable to look up, "whenever you have anything to say to me I feel honoured."

"But before I enter on that question, let me just touch a point on which your father took me into confidence; by the way, it was that very evening on which I once before fulfilled a mission from Fred, just after he had gone to college. Mr Garth told me what happened on the night of Featherstone's death—how you refused to burn the will; and he said that you had some heart-prickings on that subject, because you had been the innocent means of hindering Fred from getting his ten thousand pounds. I have kept that in mind, and I have heard something that may relieve you on that score—may show you that no sin-offering is demanded from you there."

Mr Farebrother paused a moment and looked at Mary. He meant to give Fred his full advantage, but it would be well, he thought, to clear her mind of any superstitions, such as women sometimes follow when they do a man the wrong of marrying him as an act of atonement. Mary's cheeks had begun to burn a little, and she was mute.

"I mean, that your action made no real difference to Fred's lot. I find that the first will would not have been legally good after the burning of the last: it would not have stood if it had been disputed, and you may be sure it would have been

disputed. So, on that score, you may feel your mind free."

"Thank you, Mr Farebrother," said Mary, earnestly. "I am grateful to you for remembering my feelings."

"Well, now I may go on. Fred, you know, has taken his degree. He has worked his way so far, and now the question is, what is he to do? That question is so difficult that he is inclined to follow his father's wishes and enter the Church, though you know better than I do that he was quite set against that formerly. I have questioned him on the subject, and I confess I see no insuperable objection to his being a clergyman, as things go. He says that he could turn his mind to doing his best in that vocation, on one condition. If that condition were fulfilled I would do my utmost in helping Fred on. After a time—not, of course, at first—he might be with me as my curate, and he would have so much to do that his stipend would be nearly what I used to get as vicar. But I repeat that there is a condition without which all this good cannot come to pass. He has opened his heart to me, Miss Garth, and asked me to plead for him. The condition lies entirely in your feeling."

Mary looked so much moved, that he said after a moment, "Let us walk a little;" and when they

were walking, he added, "To speak quite plainly, Fred will not take any course which would lessen the chance that you would consent to be his wife; but with that prospect, he will try his best at anything you approve."

"I cannot possibly say that I will ever be his wife, Mr Farebrother; but I certainly never will be his wife if he becomes a clergyman. What you say is most generous and kind; I don't mean for a moment to correct your judgment. It is only that I have my girlish, mocking way of looking at things," said Mary, with a returning sparkle of playfulness in her answer which only made its modesty more charming.

"He wishes me to report exactly what you think," said Mr Farebrother.

"I could not love a man who is ridiculous," said Mary, not choosing to go deeper. "Fred has sense and knowledge enough to make him respectable, if he likes, in some good worldly business, but I can never imagine him preaching and exhorting, and pronouncing blessings, and praying by the sick, without feeling as if I were looking at a caricature. His being a clergyman would be only for gentility's sake, and I think there is nothing more contemptible than such imbecile gentility. I used to think that of Mr Crowse, with his

empty face and neat umbrella and mincing little speeches. What right have such men to represent Christianity—as if it were an institution for getting up idiots genteelly—as if——" Mary checked herself. She had been carried along as if she had been speaking to Fred instead of Mr Farebrother.

"Young women are severe; they don't feel the stress of action as men do, though perhaps I ought to make you an exception there. But you don't put Fred Vincy on so low a level as that?"

"No, indeed; he has plenty of sense, but I think he would not show it as a clergyman. He would be a piece of professional affectation."

"Then the answer is quite decided. As a clergyman he could have no hope?"

Mary shook her head.

"But if he braved all the difficulties of getting his bread in some other way—will you give him the support of hope? May he count on winning you?"

"I think Fred ought not to need telling again what I have already said to him," Mary answered, with a slight resentment in her manner. "I mean that he ought not to put such questions until he has done something worthy, instead of saying that he could do it."

Mr Farebrother was silent for a minute or more, and then, as they turned and paused under the shadow of a maple at the end of a grassy walk, said, "I understand that you resist any attempt to fetter you, but either your feeling for Fred Vincy excludes your entertaining another attachment, or it does not: either he may count on your remaining single until he shall have earned your hand, or he may in any case be disappointed. Pardon me, Mary—you know I used to catechise you under that name—but when the state of a woman's affections touches the happiness of another life —of more lives than one—I think it would be the nobler course for her to be perfectly direct and open."

Mary in her turn was silent, wondering not at Mr Farebrother's manner but at his tone, which had a grave restrained emotion in it. When the strange idea flashed across her that his words had reference to himself, she was incredulous, and ashamed of entertaining it. She had never thought that any man could love her except Fred, who had espoused her with the umbrella ring, when she wore socks and little strapped shoes: still less that she could be of any importance to Mr Farebrother, the cleverest man in her narrow circle. She had only time to feel that all this was

hazy and perhaps illusory; but one thing was clear and determined—her answer.

"Since you think it my duty, Mr Farebrother, I will tell you that I have too strong a feeling for Fred to give him up for any one else. I should never be quite happy if I thought he was unhappy for the loss of me. It has taken such deep root in me—my gratitude to him for always loving me best, and minding so much if I hurt myself, from the time when we were very little. I cannot imagine any new feeling coming to make that weaker. I should like better than anything to see him worthy of every one's respect. But please tell him I will not promise to marry him till then: I should shame and grieve my father and mother. He is free to choose some one else."

"Then I have fulfilled my commission thoroughly," said Mr Farebrother, putting out his hand to Mary, "and I shall ride back to Middlemarch forthwith. With this prospect before him, we shall get Fred into the right niche somehow, and I hope I shall live to join your hands. God bless you!"

"Oh, please stay, and let me give you some tea," said Mary. Her eyes filled with tears, for something indefinable, something like the resolute suppression of a pain in Mr Farebrother's manner,

made her feel suddenly miserable, as she had once felt when she saw her father's hands trembling in a moment of trouble.

"No, my dear, no. I must get back."

In three minutes the Vicar was on horseback again, having gone magnanimously through a duty much harder than the renunciation of whist, or even than the writing of penitential meditations.

# CHAPTER LIII.

It is but a shallow haste which concludeth insincerity from what outsiders call inconsistency—putting a dead mechanism of "ifs" and "therefores" for the living myriad of hidden suckers whereby the belief and the conduct are wrought into mutual sustainment.

Mr Bulstrode, when he was hoping to acquire a new interest in Lowick, had naturally had an especial wish that the new clergyman should be one whom he thoroughly approved; and he believed it to be a chastisement and admonition directed to his own shortcomings and those of the nation at large, that just about the time when he came in possession of the deeds which made him the proprietor of Stone Court, Mr Farebrother "read himself" into the quaint little church and preached his first sermon to the congregation of farmers, labourers, and village artisans. It was not that Mr Bulstrode intended to frequent Lowick Church or to reside at Stone Court for a good while to come: he had bought the excellent farm and

fine homestead simply as a retreat which he might gradually enlarge as to the land and beautify as to the dwelling, until it should be conducive to the divine glory that he should enter on it as a residence, partially withdrawing from his present exertions in the administration of business, and throwing more conspicuously on the side of Gospel truth the weight of local landed proprietorship, which Providence might increase by unforeseen occasions of purchase. A strong leading in this direction seemed to have been given in the surprising facility of getting Stone Court, when every one had expected that Mr Rigg Featherstone would have clung to it as the Garden of Eden. That was what poor old Peter himself had expected; having often, in imagination, looked up through the sods above him, and, unobstructed by perspective, seen his frog-faced legatee enjoying the fine old place to the perpetual surprise and disappointment of other survivors.

But how little we know what would make paradise for our neighbours! We judge from our own desires, and our neighbours themselves are not always open enough even to throw out a hint of theirs. The cool and judicious Joshua Rigg had not allowed his parent to perceive that Stone Court was anything less than the chief good in his esti-

mation, and he had certainly wished to call it his own. But as Warren Hastings looked at gold and thought of buying Daylesford, so Joshua Rigg looked at Stone Court and thought of buying gold. He had a very distinct and intense vision of his chief good, the vigorous greed which he had inherited having taken a special form by dint of circumstance: and his chief good was to be a money-changer. From his earliest employment as an errand-boy in a seaport, he had looked through the windows of the money-changers as other boys look through the windows of the pastry-cooks; the fascination had wrought itself gradually into a deep special passion; he meant, when he had property, to do many things, one of them being to marry a genteel young person; but these were all accidents and joys that imagination could dispense with. The one joy after which his soul thirsted was to have a money-changer's shop on a much-frequented quay, to have locks all round him of which he held the keys, and to look sublimely cool as he handled the breeding coins of all nations, while helpless Cupidity looked at him enviously from the other side of an iron lattice. The strength of that passion had been a power enabling him to master all the knowledge necessary to gratify it. And when others were thinking that he had

settled at Stone Court for life, Joshua himself was thinking that the moment now was not far off when he should settle on the North Quay with the best appointments in safes and locks.

Enough. We are concerned with looking at Joshua Rigg's sale of his land from Mr Bulstrode's point of view, and he interpreted it as a cheering dispensation conveying perhaps a sanction to a purpose which he had for some time entertained without external encouragement; he interpreted it thus, but not too confidently, offering up his thanksgiving in guarded phraseology. His doubts did not arise from the possible relations of the event to Joshua Rigg's destiny, which belonged to the unmapped regions not taken under the providential government, except perhaps in an imperfect colonial way; but they arose from reflecting that this dispensation too might be a chastisement for himself, as Mr Farebrother's induction to the living clearly was.

This was not what Mr Bulstrode said to any man for the sake of deceiving him: it was what he said to himself—it was as genuinely his mode of explaining events as any theory of yours may be, if you happen to disagree with him. For the egoism which enters into our theories does not affect their sincerity; rather, the more

our egoism is satisfied, the more robust is our belief.

However, whether for sanction or for chastisement, Mr Bulstrode, hardly fifteen months after the death of Peter Featherstone, had become the proprietor of Stone Court, and what Peter would say "if he were worthy to know," had become an inexhaustible and consolatory subject of conversation to his disappointed relatives. The tables were now turned on that dear brother departed, and to contemplate the frustration of his cunning by the superior cunning of things in general was a cud of delight to Solomon. Mrs Waule had a melancholy triumph in the proof that it did not answer to make false Featherstones and cut off the genuine; and Sister Martha receiving the news in the Chalky Flats said, "Dear, dear! then the Almighty could have been none so pleased with the almshouses after all."

Affectionate Mrs Bulstrode was particularly glad of the advantage which her husband's health was likely to get from the purchase of Stone Court. Few days passed without his riding thither and looking over some part of the farm with the bailiff, and the evenings were delicious in that quiet spot, when the new hay-ricks lately set up were sending forth odours to mingle with

the breath of the rich old garden. One evening, while the sun was still above the horizon and burning in golden lamps among the great walnut boughs, Mr Bulstrode was pausing on horseback outside the front gate waiting for Caleb Garth, who had met him by appointment to give an opinion on a question of stable drainage, and was now advising the bailiff in the rick-yard.

Mr Bulstrode was conscious of being in a good spiritual frame and more than usually serene, under the influence of his innocent recreation. He was doctrinally convinced that there was a total absence of merit in himself; but that doctrinal conviction may be held without pain when the sense of demerit does not take a distinct shape in memory and revive the tingling of shame or the pang of remorse. Nay, it may be held with intense satisfaction when the depth of our sinning is but a measure for the depth of forgiveness, and a clenching proof that we are peculiar instruments of the divine intention. The memory has as many moods as the temper, and shifts its scenery like a diorama. At this moment Mr Bulstrode felt as if the sunshine were all one with that of far-off evenings when he was a very young man and used to go out preaching beyond Highbury. And he would willingly have had that

service of exhortation in prospect now. The texts were there still, and so was his own facility in expounding them. His brief reverie was interrupted by the return of Caleb Garth, who also was on horseback, and was just shaking his bridle before starting, when he exclaimed—

"Bless my heart! what's this fellow in black coming along the lane? He's like one of those men one sees about after the races."

Mr Bulstrode turned his horse and looked along the lane, but made no reply. The comer was our slight acquaintance Mr Raffles, whose appearance presented no other change than such as was due to a suit of black and a crape hat-band. He was within three yards of the horsemen now, and they could see the flash of recognition in his face as he whirled his stick upward, looking all the while at Mr Bulstrode, and at last exclaiming:—

"By Jove, Nick, it's you! I couldn't be mistaken, though the five-and-twenty years have played old Boguy with us both! How are you, eh? you didn't expect to see *me* here. Come, shake us by the hand."

To say that Mr Raffles' manner was rather excited would be only one mode of saying that it was evening. Caleb Garth could see that there was a moment of struggle and hesitation in Mr

Bulstrode, but it ended in his putting out his hand coldly to Raffles and saying—

"I did not indeed expect to see you in this remote country place."

"Well, it belongs to a stepson of mine," said Raffles, adjusting himself in a swaggering attitude. "I came to see him here before. I'm not so surprised at seeing you, old fellow, because I picked up a letter—what you may call a providential thing. It's uncommonly fortunate I met you, though; for I don't care about seeing my stepson: he's not affectionate, and his poor mother's gone now. To tell the truth, I came out of love to you, Nick: I came to get your address, for—look here!" Raffles drew a crumpled paper from his pocket.

Almost any other man than Caleb Garth might have been tempted to linger on the spot for the sake of hearing all he could about a man whose acquaintance with Bulstrode seemed to imply passages in the banker's life so unlike anything that was known of him in Middlemarch that they must have the nature of a secret to pique curiosity. But Caleb was peculiar: certain human tendencies which are commonly strong were almost absent from his mind; and one of these was curiosity about personal affairs. Especially, if there was anything discreditable to be found out con-

cerning another man, Caleb preferred not to know it; and if he had to tell anybody under him that his evil doings were discovered, he was more embarrassed than the culprit. He now spurred his horse, and saying, "I wish you good evening, Mr Bulstrode; I must be getting home," set off at a trot.

"You didn't put your full address to this letter," Raffles continued. "That was not like the first-rate man of business you used to be. 'The Shrubs,' —they may be anywhere: you live near at hand, eh?—have cut the London concern altogether—perhaps turned country squire—have a rural mansion to invite me to. Lord, how many years it is ago! The old lady must have been dead a pretty long while—gone to glory without the pain of knowing how poor her daughter was, eh? But, by Jove! you're very pale and pasty, Nick. Come, if you're going home, I'll walk by your side."

Mr Bulstrode's usual paleness had in fact taken an almost deathly hue. Five minutes before, the expanse of his life had been submerged in its evening sunshine which shone backward to its remembered morning: sin seemed to be a question of doctrine and inward penitence, humiliation an exercise of the closet, the bearing of his deeds a matter of private vision adjusted solely by spiritual

relations and conceptions of the divine purposes. And now, as if by some hideous magic, this loud red figure had risen before him in unmanageable solidity — an incorporate past which had not entered into his imagination of chastisements. But Mr Bulstrode's thought was busy, and he was not a man to act or speak rashly.

"I was going home," he said, "but I can defer my ride a little. And you can, if you please, rest here."

"Thank you," said Raffles, making a grimace. "I don't care now about seeing my stepson. I'd rather go home with you."

"Your stepson, if Mr Rigg Featherstone was he, is here no longer. I am master here now."

Raffles opened wide eyes, and gave a long whistle of surprise, before he said, "Well then, I've no objection. I've had enough walking from the coach-road. I never was much of a walker, or rider either. What I like is a smart vehicle and a spirited cob. I was always a little heavy in the saddle. What a pleasant surprise it must be to you to see me, old fellow!" he continued, as they turned towards the house. "You don't say so; but you never took your luck heartily—you were always thinking of improving the occasion—you'd such a gift for improving your luck."

Mr Raffles seemed greatly to enjoy his own wit, and swung his leg in a swaggering manner which was rather too much for his companion's judicious patience.

"If I remember rightly," Mr Bulstrode observed, with chill anger, "our acquaintance many years ago had not the sort of intimacy which you are now assuming, Mr Raffles. Any services you desire of me will be the more readily rendered if you will avoid a tone of familiarity which did not lie in our former intercourse, and can hardly be warranted by more than twenty years of separation."

"You don't like being called Nick? Why, I always called you Nick in my heart, and though lost to sight, to memory dear. By Jove! my feelings have ripened for you like fine old cognac. I hope you've got some in the house now. Josh filled my flask well the last time."

Mr Bulstrode had not yet fully learned that even the desire for cognac was not stronger in Raffles than the desire to torment, and that a hint of annoyance always served him as a fresh cue. But it was at least clear that further objection was useless, and Mr Bulstrode, in giving orders to the housekeeper for the accommodation of the guest, had a resolute air of quietude.

There was the comfort of thinking that this

housekeeper had been in the service of Rigg also, and might accept the idea that Mr Bulstrode entertained Raffles merely as a friend of her former master. When there was food and drink spread before his visitor in the wainscoated parlour, and no witness in the room, Mr Bulstrode said—

"Your habits and mine are so different, Mr Raffles, that we can hardly enjoy each other's society. The wisest plan for both of us will therefore be to part as soon as possible. Since you say that you wished to meet me, you probably considered that you had some business to transact with me. But under the circumstances I will invite you to remain here for the night, and I will myself ride over here early to-morrow morning—before breakfast, in fact, when I can receive any communication you have to make to me."

"With all my heart," said Raffles; "this is a comfortable place—a little dull for a continuance; but I can put up with it for a night, with this good liquor and the prospect of seeing you again in the morning. You're a much better host than my stepson was; but Josh owed me a bit of a grudge for marrying his mother; and between you and me there was never anything but kindness."

Mr Bulstrode, hoping that the peculiar mixture of joviality and sneering in Raffles' manner was a

good deal the effect of drink, had determined to wait till he was quite sober before he spent more words upon him. But he rode home with a terribly lucid vision of the difficulty there would be in arranging any result that could be permanently counted on with this man. It was inevitable that he should wish to get rid of John Raffles, though his reappearance could not be regarded as lying outside the divine plan. The spirit of evil might have sent him to threaten Mr Bulstrode's subversion as an instrument of good; but the threat must have been permitted, and was a chastisement of a new kind. It was an hour of anguish for him very different from the hours in which his struggle had been securely private, and which had ended with a sense that his secret misdeeds were pardoned and his services accepted. Those misdeeds even when committed—had they not been half sanctified by the singleness of his desire to devote himself and all he possessed to the furtherance of the divine scheme? And was he after all to become a mere stone of stumbling and a rock of offence? For who would understand the work within him? Who would not, when there was the pretext of casting disgrace upon him, confound his whole life and the truths he had espoused, in one heap of obloquy?

In his closest meditations the life-long habit of Mr Bulstrode's mind clad his most egoistic terrors in doctrinal references to superhuman ends. But even while we are talking and meditating about the earth's orbit and the solar system, what we feel and adjust our movements to is the stable earth and the changing day. And now within all the automatic succession of theoretic phrases—distinct and inmost as the shiver and the ache of oncoming fever when we are discussing abstract pain, was the forecast of disgrace in the presence of his neighbours and of his own wife. For the pain, as well as the public estimate of disgrace, depends on the amount of previous profession. To men who only aim at escaping felony, nothing short of the prisoner's dock is disgrace. But Mr Bulstrode had aimed at being an eminent Christian.

It was not more than half-past seven in the morning when he again reached Stone Court. The fine old place never looked more like a delightful home than at that moment; the great white lilies were in flower, the nasturtiums, their pretty leaves all silvered with dew, were running away over the low stone wall; the very noises all around had a heart of peace within them. But everything was spoiled for the owner as he walked on the gravel in front and awaited the descent

of Mr Raffles, with whom he was condemned to breakfast.

It was not long before they were seated together in the wainscoated parlour over their tea and toast, which was as much as Raffles cared to take at that early hour. The difference between his morning and evening self was not so great as his companion had imagined that it might be; the delight in tormenting was perhaps even the stronger because his spirits were rather less highly pitched. Certainly his manners seemed more disagreeable by the morning light.

"As I have little time to spare, Mr Raffles," said the banker, who could hardly do more than sip his tea and break his toast without eating it, "I shall be obliged if you will mention at once the ground on which you wished to meet with me. I presume that you have a home elsewhere and will be glad to return to it."

"Why, if a man has got any heart, doesn't he want to see an old friend, Nick?—I must call you Nick—we always did call you young Nick when we knew you meant to marry the old widow. Some said you had a handsome family likeness to old Nick, but that was your mother's fault, calling you Nicholas. Aren't you glad to see me again? I expected an invite to stay with

you at some pretty place. My own establishment is broken up now my wife's dead. I've no particular attachment to any spot; I would as soon settle hereabout as anywhere."

"May I ask why you returned from America? I considered that the strong wish you expressed to go there, when an adequate sum was furnished, was tantamount to an engagement that you would remain there for life."

"Never knew that a wish to go to a place was the same thing as a wish to stay. But I did stay a matter of ten years; it didn't suit me to stay any longer. And I'm not going again, Nick." Here Mr Raffles winked slowly as he looked at Mr Bulstrode.

"Do you wish to be settled in any business? What is your calling now?"

"Thank you, my calling is to enjoy myself as much as I can. I don't care about working any more. If I did anything it would be a little travelling in the tobacco line—or something of that sort, which takes a man into agreeable company. But not without an independence to fall back upon. That's what I want: I'm not so strong as I was, Nick, though I've got more colour than you. I want an independence."

"That could be supplied to you, if you would

engage to keep at a distance," said Mr Bulstrode, perhaps with a little too much eagerness in his undertone.

"That must be as it suits my convenience," said Raffles, coolly. "I see no reason why I shouldn't make a few acquaintances hereabout. I'm not ashamed of myself as company for anybody. I dropped my portmanteau at the turnpike when I got down—change of linen—genuine—honour bright!—more than fronts and wristbands; and with this suit of mourning, straps and everything, I should do you credit among the nobs here." Mr Raffles had pushed away his chair and looked down at himself, particularly at his straps. His chief intention was to annoy Bulstrode, but he really thought that his appearance now would produce a good effect, and that he was not only handsome and witty, but clad in a mourning style which implied solid connections.

"If you intend to rely on me in any way, Mr Raffles," said Bulstrode, after a moment's pause, "you will expect to meet my wishes."

"Ah, to be sure," said Raffles, with a mocking cordiality. "Didn't I always do it? Lord, you made a pretty thing out of me, and I got but little. I've often thought since, I might have done better by telling the old woman that I'd

found her daughter and her grandchild: it would have suited my feelings better; I've got a soft place in my heart. But you've buried the old lady by this time, I suppose—it's all one to her now. And you've got your fortune out of that profitable business which had such a blessing on it. You've taken to being a nob, buying land, being a country bashaw. Still in the Dissenting line, eh? Still godly? Or taken to the Church as more genteel?"

This time Mr Raffles' slow wink and slight protrusion of his tongue was worse than a nightmare, because it held the certitude that it was not a nightmare, but a waking misery. Mr Bulstrode felt a shuddering nausea, and did not speak, but was considering diligently whether he should not leave Raffles to do as he would, and simply defy him as a slanderer. The man would soon show himself disreputable enough to make people disbelieve him. "But not when he tells any ugly-looking truth about *you*," said discerning consciousness. And again: it seemed no wrong to keep Raffles at a distance, but Mr Bulstrode shrank from the direct falsehood of denying true statements. It was one thing to look back on forgiven sins, nay, to explain questionable conformity to lax customs, and another to enter deliberately on the necessity of falsehood.

But since Bulstrode did not speak, Raffles ran on, by way of using time to the utmost.

"I've not had such fine luck as you, by Jove! Things went confoundedly with me in New York; those Yankees are cool hands, and a man of gentlemanly feelings has no chance with them. I married when I came back—a nice woman in the tobacco trade—very fond of me—but the trade was restricted, as we say. She had been settled there a good many years by a friend; but there was a son too much in the case. Josh and I never hit it off. However, I made the most of the position, and I've always taken my glass in good company. It's been all on the square with me; I'm as open as the day. You won't take it ill of me that I didn't look you up before; I've got a complaint that makes me a little dilatory. I thought you were trading and praying away in London still, and didn't find you there. But you see I was sent to you, Nick—perhaps for a blessing to both of us."

Mr Raffles ended with a jocose snuffle: no man felt his intellect more superior to religious cant. And if the cunning which calculates on the meanest feelings in men could be called intellect, he had his share, for under the blurting rallying tone with which he spoke to Bulstrode, there was

an evident selection of statements, as if they had been so many moves at chess. Meanwhile Bulstrode had determined on his move, and he said, with gathered resolution—

"You will do well to reflect, Mr Raffles, that it is possible for a man to overreach himself in the effort to secure undue advantage. Although I am not in any way bound to you, I am willing to supply you with a regular annuity—in quarterly payments—so long as you fulfil a promise to remain at a distance from this neighbourhood. It is in your power to choose. If you insist on remaining here, even for a short time, you will get nothing from me. I shall decline to know you."

"Ha, ha!" said Raffles, with an affected explosion, "that reminds me of a droll dog of a thief who declined to know the constable."

"Your allusions are lost on me, sir," said Bulstrode, with white heat; "the law has no hold on me either through your agency or any other."

"You can't understand a joke, my good fellow. I only meant that I should never decline to know you. But let us be serious. Your quarterly payment won't quite suit me. I like my freedom."

Here Raffles rose and stalked once or twice up and down the room, swinging his leg, and assum-

ing an air of masterly meditation. At last he stopped opposite Bulstrode, and said, "I'll tell you what! Give us a couple of hundreds—come, that's modest—and I'll go away—honour bright! —pick up my portmanteau and go away. But I shall not give up my liberty for a dirty annuity. I shall come and go where I like. Perhaps it may suit me to stay away, and correspond with a friend; perhaps not. Have you the money with you?"

"No, I have one hundred," said Bulstrode, feeling the immediate riddance too great a relief to be rejected on the ground of future uncertainties. "I will forward you the other if you will mention an address."

"No, I'll wait here till you bring it," said Raffles. "I'll take a stroll, and have a snack, and you'll be back by that time."

Mr Bulstrode's sickly body, shattered by the agitations he had gone through since the last evening, made him feel abjectly in the power of this loud invulnerable man. At that moment he snatched at a temporary repose to be won on any terms. He was rising to do what Raffles suggested, when the latter said, lifting up his finger as if with a sudden recollection—

"I did have another look after Sarah again,

though I didn't tell you; I'd a tender conscience about that pretty young woman. I didn't find her, but I found out her husband's name, and I made a note of it. But hang it, I lost my pocket-book. However, if I heard it, I should know it again. I've got my faculties as if I was in my prime, but names wear out, by Jove! Sometimes I'm no better than a confounded tax-paper before the names are filled in. However, if I hear of her and her family, you shall know, Nick. You'd like to do something for her, now she's your step-daughter."

"Doubtless," said Mr Bulstrode, with the usual steady look of his light-grey eyes; "though that might reduce my power of assisting you."

As he walked out of the room, Raffles winked slowly at his back, and then turned towards the window to watch the banker riding away—virtually at his command. His lips first curled with a smile and then opened with a short triumphant laugh.

"But what the deuce *was* the name?" he presently said, half aloud, scratching his head, and wrinkling his brows horizontally. He had not really cared or thought about this point of forgetfulness until it occurred to him in his invention of annoyances for Bulstrode.

"It began with L; it was almost all l's, I fancy," he went on, with a sense that he was getting hold of the slippery name. But the hold was too slight, and he soon got tired of this mental chase; for few men were more impatient of private occupation or more in need of making themselves continually heard than Mr Raffles. He preferred using his time in pleasant conversation with the bailiff and the housekeeper, from whom he gathered as much as he wanted to know about Mr Bulstrode's position in Middlemarch.

After all, however, there was a dull space of time which needed relieving with bread and cheese and ale, and when he was seated alone with these resources in the wainscoated parlour, he suddenly slapped his knee, and exclaimed, "Ladislaw!" That action of memory which he had tried to set going, and had abandoned in despair, had suddenly completed itself without conscious effort—a common experience, agreeable as a completed sneeze, even if the name remembered is of no value. Raffles immediately took out his pocket-book, and wrote down the name, not because he expected to use it, but merely for the sake of not being at a loss if he ever did happen to want it. He was not going to tell Bulstrode: there was no actual good in telling, and to a mind

like that of Mr Raffles there is always probable good in a secret.

He was satisfied with his present success, and by three o'clock that day he had taken up his portmanteau at the turnpike and mounted the coach, relieving Mr Bulstrode's eyes of an ugly black spot on the landscape at Stone Court, but not relieving him of the dread that the black spot might reappear and become inseparable even from the vision of his hearth.

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